FROM MEMORY'S SHRINE

THE REMINISCENCES OF CARMEN SYLVA

H. M. QUEEN ELISABETH OF ROUMANIA

HIST
WOMEN

FROM MEMORY'S SHRINE

ELISABETH, CONSORT OF CHARLES I,
KING OF RUMANIA.

FROM MEMORY'S SHRINE

THE REMINISCENCES OF

CARMEN SYLVA

(H.M. QUEEN ELISABETH OF ROUMANIA)

Translated from the German, by Her Majesty's desire, by her former Secretary

EDITH HOPKIRK

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON

J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

1911

TEXAS EASTERN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

COPYRIGHT, 1911, BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

Published March, 1911

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	9
I.	CLARA SCHUMANN	13
II.	GRANDMAMMA	30
III.	ERNST MORITZ ARNDT	60
IV.	BERNAYS	69
V.	TWO OLD RETAINERS	85
VI.	FANNY LAVATER	97
VII.	BUNSEN	119
VIII.	PERTHES	139
IX.	A FAITH-HEALER	151
X.	MARY BARNES	175
XI.	THE FAMILY VALETTE	181
XII.	KARL SOHN, THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER	192
XIII.	WEIZCHEN	203
XIV.	A GROUP OF HUMBLE FRIENDS	217
XV.	MY TUTORS	232
XVI.	MARIE	243
XVII.	MY BROTHER OTTO	251

ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Carmen Sylva ..... *Frontispiece*

Madame Schumann 16

H. M. King Charles of Roumania 28

Royal Palace at Bucarest 64

A Queen at Her Loom 94

H. M. Queen Elisabeth of Roumania 140

H. M. Queen Elisabeth of Roumania 182

H. M. Queen Elisabeth of Roumania 218

Prince Otto zu Wied 252

FROM

MEMORY'S SHRINE

INTRODUCTION

It has been said by a well-known German novelist of our day in one of his most recent works that as we approach our fiftieth year our hearts nearly always resemble a grave-yard, thronged with memories, a far greater share of our affection belonging by that time to those who are already at rest beneath the earth than may be claimed by those still left here to wander with us on its surface. This remark of Rosegger's is above all true of such of us as have been accustomed from our earliest youth to stand mourning beside new-made graves, and see our nearest and dearest prematurely carried off in Death's relentless grasp.

It is in this cemetery of mine, sacred to the memory of all whom I have loved and lost, that I would linger this day, holding commune as is my wont with my beloved dead; but for once I would not that my pilgrimage were altogether a solitary one. As in thought I stand before each grave in turn, gazing with the spirit's eyes on the dear form so clearly recognisable under the flowers I have strewn above it, I would fain retrace for others than myself every line of the features I know so well, that all you to

whom I speak may learn to know and love them also. Even the best are all too soon forgotten in this busy, restless world, but it may be that my words, coming from the depths of my heart, will strike a responsive chord in the hearts of those who read them, and kindling in their breasts a feeling like my own, will keep alive for a little space these figures I call back from the shadowy Past. My aim will be achieved if I can but convey to other souls something of the impression my own received from the noble and beautiful lives with whom I have come in contact, and which my pen will now strive with the utmost fidelity to portray.

I am about, then, to throw open the sanctuary I have so long jealously guarded from the world—the private chapel within whose niches my Penates are enshrined. Those to whom I pay a constant tribute of love and gratitude were either the idols of my early youth or the friends of riper years. I shall try to show them as they appeared to me on earth, in every varying aspect, according to season and circumstance, and to the changes of my own mood and habits of thought during the different stages of my mental development. To my youthful enthusiasm many of them became types of perfection, in whom I could discern no human weakness—to have known them was my pride and happiness. All that was best in myself I attributed to their influence, and their presence has never ceased to dwell with me since they have been removed to higher spheres. They, on whose lips I hung with such rapt attention, drinking in every word that fell

from them, very possibly paid but small heed to the silent, earnest-eyed child, nor guessed how fondly those lessons of wisdom and holiness were being treasured up in that little heart. For to none of us is it ever given to know the precise hour in which our own soul has spoken most clearly and forcibly to another soul, nor to fathom the full import of the message with which we are entrusted towards our brethren. We cast our bread upon the waters of life, not knowing its destination, and the seed we scatter with a lavish hand is borne in all directions by the winds to take root it may be in the soil we should have deemed least fit for culture. Children often observe more keenly and reflect more thoughtfully than their elders would give them credit for. We need but look back each of us to our own childhood, in order rightly to understand how deep and lasting are the impressions then received, and how they may colour the whole after-current of our lives. Now, as I recall those days, I feel myself, as it were, suddenly transported into the midst of an enchanted garden, among whose rare and luxuriant blossoms I would fain gather together the fairest specimens for a garland. But they spring up around me in such wild profusion, and their beauty is so radiant, their colours so rich, their fragrance so intense, that I am embarrassed in my choice, and only stretch out my hand timidly and hesitatingly towards them, fearing lest in plucking I should injure the least of these fairest works of Creation. Well, indeed, may I feel diffident as to my own skill in selecting and grouping them aright.

Yet, though the skill be lacking, goodwill and sincerity I may at least claim to bring with me in full measure to my labour of love. It is no mixture of Fact and Fiction I would here compile, nothing but the simple, unadorned Truth, things I have myself seen and heard. Not that I would have these pages resemble memoirs, in the ordinary sense of the word, for what are memoirs at the best but a superior sort of gossip—when they are not, that is to say, simply gossip of a despicable kind! No mysteries will be here unveiled, no scandalous secrets dragged to light. I do but propose to draw back the curtain from before the picture-gallery within whose sacred precincts I have until now allowed no other footsteps than my own to stray, so that all who will may render homage with me to the moral and intellectual value of the lives these portraits strive to commemorate.

CHAPTER I

CLARA SCHUMANN

It is but fitting and natural that I should open with this revered name the series of my reminiscences, as my childish recollections hardly go further back than the date of the first time I heard her, when I was only eight years old, at my very first concert in Bonn. That was so great an event in my life, and I was so impatient for the evening to come, that I hardly know how I got through the whole day that preceded it. Seldom has any day since appeared so interminably long. Still, the evening did come at last, and I remember accompanying my mother to the concert-room, into which she was wheeled in her invalid-chair, for, although still quite young, she had been for many years in ill-health and unable to walk. But whether I walked by her side, or how I got there, I no longer know, for I have only a sort of confused recollection of having been brought there without any effort on my own part, as though I had been borne thither on wings! My first concert! My heart still beats loud when I think of it.

It was a big, crowded room we entered. But I did not see the people. I paid no attention to anybody. I saw nothing but the estrade on which the piano was placed. Our seats were so far to the right that, small as I was, I should not have seen the pianist at all had I not obtained my mother's per-

mission to establish my diminutive person in the passage left between the two rows of seats, where I had a full view of the keyboard. I was all eyes, all ears, quivering from head to foot with intense nervous expectation. At last Madame Schumann came in, and, advancing swiftly to the instrument, sat down before it. She was dressed in black velvet, with a single deep-red rose stuck low behind one ear in her dark hair, which was very thick and inclined to curl, and which she wore plainly parted and flat to the head, instead of having it according to the fashion of those days twisted to stand out on each side of the face. What struck me at once was something harmonious in her whole appearance; it always seemed to me afterwards as if her dress must have been crimson too, to match the rose in her hair. Her hands were small, firm and plump, the touch full, healthy and vigorous, almost of virile strength. I carried the rich, clear tones away with me, to ring in my ears for long afterwards. But that which went straight to my heart, and haunted me longer still, was the pathetic look in her eyes.

Leaning a little forward, bending as it were over the keys, as if to be alone with her own music and the better to hear herself, apparently utterly oblivious of the rest of the world, the player kept her magnificent, melancholy eyes persistently cast down. But I could see those wonderful eyes, and her sadness impressed me so much that it almost spoilt my pleasure in the music, for I was wondering all the time how it could be that anyone who played so divinely could all the same look so unutterably sad.

I did not then know her unhappy story; I had not heard how her husband had gone out of his mind, leaving her penniless, with a large family to provide for, and that it was, indeed, to provide her children's daily bread that she thus played in public. It did not occur to me that anyone could be poor who wore a velvet dress. Besides it was impossible to my childish mind to conceive that any artist could be poor. On the contrary, I looked upon them all as being fabulously rich, as having all the treasures of the universe at their disposal. Those beliefs were natural to my age, for in childhood Romance is Reality, and Reality a very poor sort of Romance! Have we not been all of us the heroes of our own fairy-tales?—either Aladdin or Robinson Crusoe, and more often Crusoe on his island than Aladdin in the magic cave, since at that time of life the riches of this world appeal very feebly to our imagination.

But for the pathetic expression of a pair of dreamy eyes my mind was sufficiently receptive, sorrow and heartache being already only too familiar to me. My mother, as I have mentioned, was at that time an invalid, my younger brother had been a sufferer from his birth, and my father was slowly dying of consumption. The daily spectacle of pain and illness may well open a child's eyes to the expression of suffering in other human faces. But as I was always a very reserved child, accustomed to keep all puzzling problems to myself and brood over them in silence, I asked no questions, and consequently learnt nothing about my new idol nor even suspected the existence of a domestic tragedy.

Schumann's works were at that time a sealed book for me, with the exception of a few simple pieces, intended for children. And children's pieces were not what I cared about. I only wanted Beethoven!

After that I did not see her again for many years —till I was grown up, a girl of twenty, in St. Petersburg. I was just recovering from an illness, and it was whilst I was still so weak that I could hardly stand, that I had the sudden news of my dear father's death. The blow was such an overwhelming one, I felt at first as if everything in life were over for me, and that I should never take pleasure in anything again. And just then Mme. Schumann arrived with her daughter Marie. The Grand Duchess Hélène, in whom so many artists had found a true friend and enlightened patroness, hastened to place rooms in her palace at the disposal of the celebrated pianist. So mother and daughter, to my unspeakable joy and consolation, took up their abode with us for seven weeks, and were lodged in the suite of apartments just above my own. Whenever she was going to practise, Mme. Schumann would send word to me, and then I would manage to drag myself upstairs, and let myself be propped up by cushions in a corner of the room, where I could listen undisturbed. It was as if I were being slowly awakened from a deathlike trance, and being brought back to an interest in life again by the strains of that exquisite music. Better still, my aunt very soon arranged for me to take some piano-lessons of this great artist, and these mark quite an epoch in my life. They were certainly quite exceptional les-

By kind permission of Messrs. Breitkopf & Härtel, 54 Great Marlborough Street, London, W.

MADAME SCHUMANN

sons in every way, altogether unlike everything else of that nature, for at first I was almost too feeble to hold my fingers on the keys. But my dear professor soon found something for me, to which my strength was just equal—Schumann's delicious "Scenes of Childhood"—and from these we went on little by little to higher flights. But it was not alone for the progress in my music that these hours were of inestimable value; I look back to them as having left their mark on the whole course of my life ever since, for I was roused from my own lethargy and despondency by learning the trials through which my new friend had passed. This noble-minded woman could, indeed, have hit upon no better lesson in fortitude than that which was contained in the simple story of her own youth, as calmly and unaffectedly she told her young companion of the catastrophe which had wrecked her life. It was, indeed, a revelation to me, this glimpse into the workings of another soul, whose sufferings I had never even suspected. The simple words in which the tale was told wrung my heart more than any studied eloquence could have done, and I blushed to think that I had dared to wrap myself up in my own sorrow, as if I were the only sufferer in the world. I learnt from her how much another had borne silently, uncomplainingly, and I understood how duty may often call upon us to take up our burden and resume the daily struggle before our wounds are yet healed, instead of giving ourselves up to the luxury of grief. I will try, as far as I can, to give Clara Schumann's story in her own words, as she told

it to me, in the long conversations we held in those unforgettable hours. She spoke of her childhood, for her troubles began early; her parents were separated, and the little girl never knew a really happy home. In spite of the slight deafness, with which she was troubled from her earliest years, her father insisted on having her trained as a musician, and she was prepared to make her appearance in public when she was only twelve years old. "It was all very hard," she related, "for I adored my mother, whom I hardly ever saw. I remember my father once taking me to Berlin to pay her a visit, and the way in which he flung the door open, with the words: 'Here, madam, I have brought your daughter to see you!' Yes, those were hard circumstances for me, and the more so, as he had married again, and my stepmother was anything but kindly disposed towards me."

There was a pause, and her expression changed as she went on to tell of her love-idyl and early marriage. This was a dreamy look in her eyes, and an arch smile on her lips that made her face quite young again, while she spoke of those bygone days of short-lived happiness.

"It was when I was only fourteen," she said, "that Robert Schumann first became a visitor at our house. He was then just eighteen years of age, and very soon we two young people had fallen in love, and even become secretly engaged. Secretly, I need hardly say, so frightened was I of my father, who, for his part, had constantly announced that he had his own quite fixed plans for my future."

Again she paused, and seemed for a moment plunged in memories of the past. I did not disturb her with questions, but waited for her to go on with her narrative, and it was with merriment once more rippling over her face that she related some of the more amusing scenes in the drama.

"Four years later it had come to open war between my affianced husband and my father, and I remember having to appear between them in the court of law, in which the struggle for my person was being decided. Schumann proved to the entire satisfaction of the court that he was of age, and perfectly well able to support a wife, whilst my father, having no just ground for his refusal, simply loaded him with insult. The decision was accordingly given in our favour, and we were legally authorised to become man and wife. At this my father's rage literally knew no bounds. Had he not often sworn that his daughter should never marry a beggarly musician, that he would hardly consider a prince good enough for her! So he turned me out of the house, refusing even to let me take my own few possessions with me, my stepmother going so far as to tear off my finger a little ring I always wore, as it had been my mother's, but which she now gave to her own daughter. Thus was I cast out of my father's house, and from the moment the door closed behind me I never saw his face again, nor ever heard a word more from him. It was as if I were really dead to him henceforth. But I did not grieve. It was by my husband's side that I wandered forth,

happy for the first time in my life, in the consciousness of our mutual affection.

"The ten years that followed were years of happiness indeed, of such happiness as it is rarely given to mortals to know on earth. I lived for my husband alone, entirely wrapt up in him. I watched every change in his countenance, I studied his every mood, and had so thoroughly identified myself with him that my own brain was on the verge of becoming affected too, when his began to give way. I did not understand at first that there was anything the matter with him, and continued to take pride as ever in following and participating in every phase through which his mind passed. But that mind was darkening, although I knew it not. His fits of melancholy grew more frequent and of longer duration, as though a baleful shadow had fallen across his soul. One night he suddenly awakened me, begging me to get up, to leave him, to stay no longer in the room. Astonished and alarmed, but accustomed to obey his lightest wish in all things, I complied with the strange request. Next day he told me that it was his fears for me, for my safety, which had induced him to send me from him. 'I feared lest I should hurt you!' he groaned. For he felt that he was gradually losing all control over his own actions, that something outside himself was continually urging him to violence against those whom he loved best in the world. Musical phantasies mixed themselves with the rest. Thus he was for ever imagining that he heard sounds, sometimes just one note of music perpetually repeated, and then again the tones would

be modulated, and vary, and combine and weave themselves into melody! And these snatches of melody he still noted down. But worse was at hand, for the day soon came, the terrible day, which put an end to all my earthly happiness, and after which it was no longer possible to conceal the truth from myself and others. My dear, unfortunate husband had managed to steal out of the house unperceived, and had attempted to drown himself in the Rhine! He was saved, but I was not allowed to see him again. It was said that it would be dangerous for him, for both of us. But he sent me a most touching message, begging me to forgive him the pain which he knew he must have caused me, and explaining how it was that he could not have acted otherwise—he felt that it was the only means of saving us both much trouble and sorrow. It almost broke my heart to hear this.

"Indeed, at first I could do nothing but sit and cry my eyes out at the immensity of the misfortune which had come upon me. I was alone in the world, with my helpless little ones, for he who had been our protection and support was himself now the most helpless of all. But it was the very immensity of my misfortune which roused me out of the apathy into which I had fallen, as I realised the necessity of an effort on my part for all these weak and helpless ones, who now depended solely on me. To my father I did not dare to appeal, and even now, in my dire distress, he gave no sign, sent me no word of kindness. But other friends took active steps to help me, and with their assistance, thanks to the

sums they collected for me, I was able to put my affairs in order, and start giving concerts to support my family. So things went on for the next three years; I travelled about, playing in all the principal towns in Europe, and my husband remained under the care of a doctor in Bonn. All this time I never once saw him, although I was always entreating to be allowed to do so.

"Then one day, just as I was about to give a concert in London, I suddenly received a letter, informing me that my husband had only a few days more to live, that I must hurry back if I wished to be in time to see him once more! And like this I had to let myself be taken to the concert-room, and like this I played! People have since told me that I never played so well in my whole life. Of that I know nothing. I went through my work mechanically, feeling half dazed, neither knowing nor caring what or how I played, and not a note of the music reaching my own ears. At the end the whole room seemed to spin round before my eyes, but I made my way out somehow, and in a very few minutes was already on my way to Bonn.

"When I arrived I was at first refused entrance to the room. But my mind was fully made up. I was determined that no power on earth should now keep us longer apart. I simply said: 'If he is really dying, then my presence can harm him no longer, and I insist upon being admitted!' So they let me in. But it was a terrible shock to see him, so changed that at first I should hardly have known him. Only his eyes, those dear, loving eyes, were still

the same, and as they fixed themselves on me I had the happiness of seeing the full light of recognition come back to them. 'Ah! my own!' he exclaimed, stretching out his arms toward me. He was frightfully weak, having of late refused all nourishment, under the delusion that the attendants wished to poison him. I could, however, prevail on him to take a little food when I brought it to him, and his eyes never left me, following my every movement. In the midst of my sorrow I yet felt a contentment at my heart that I had not known during these last years, whilst I was separated from him. I might almost say I was happy once more, just in being with him, and in feeling that his affection was unchanged. But it could not last long—his strength was ebbing fast—soon came the last parting, and then all was over, and I was really alone in the wide world, with my poor, fatherless children!''

She broke down completely on these last words, and for some minutes we sat together in perfect silence, my tears flowing in sympathy, for I was deeply moved at witnessing her grief. Her story was made the more touching by the simplicity with which it was told; this went to my heart more surely than the most studied eloquence. And it was ever the one theme—always of *him* she spoke! She came back constantly to this one period of life, as if all the rest—everything that had taken place since—did not count at all. Evidently her own life had come to an end for her when her husband died. If she lived on at all it was simply in the idea of contributing to raise a monument to his fame. She was

really quivering with indignation when she related how on one occasion, after one of her recitals, a lady had actually asked her if her husband had not also been a pianist? But my contemptuous exclamation, "Oh, the poor thing!" made her smile in spite of herself. I remember, too, how I could never satisfy her with my rendering of the little piece called "Happiness enough." She was always entreating me to put more fullness and softness into it, to make it overflow, so to say, with happiness. And in the depths of her eyes I read the triumphant certitude that this music told the happiness that had once been hers, and that to none other would it ever be given to express it as she could. Ah! those were precious hours, indeed, which I passed with her, and the lessons were something much more to me than mere music-lessons, for even greater and nobler than the *artist* was the *woman* I learnt to know in them.

In the month of May we went to Moscow, and it was there I heard Schumann's Variations for two pianos played by Mme. Schumann and Nicolas Rubinstein. The latter was an admirable pianist, gifted with great delicacy and depth of feeling, and if without the fiery, almost demoniacal, inspiration that distinguished his brother's playing, this for the duet on two pianos was rather an advantage than otherwise.

After that several years passed before I saw Mme. Schumann again, and then it being announced that she would appear at a concert in Cologne with Stockhausen, my mother and I went over for it. We went early in the day, so as to be in time for the last

rehearsal, but at this we had the disappointment of not hearing Mme. Schumann, for she had met with a slight accident, which obliged her to rest till the evening, and her place at the piano was taken by Brahms. In spite of her absence, it was all the same a most interesting rehearsal. I had the pleasure of hearing Brahms play and Stockhausen sing, and enjoyed everything immensely. I could not help noticing, however, that my mother's thoughts were entirely elsewhere, and it annoyed me that she should let anything distract her attention from the glorious music. Nor did we stay quite to the end, much to my disappointment, but drove off to the Flora-garden, and lunched there. And as we sat there, I could not help noticing that we seemed to attract the attention of a little group of gentlemen, strangers, as I thought them, who were walking up and down, and one of whom at last seated himself at a little table quite close to ours, looking at me so hard, that I slightly turned away from him. But when we rose to leave, they all three came up to us, and we recognised Herr von Werner, whose acquaintance we had made at Prince Hohenzollern's whilst his two companions were none other than the young Prince of Roumania, and the latter's representative in Paris, the last mentioned being the gentleman who had just been observing me so closely. But I was sincerely glad to meet the young Prince again, for I had seen much of him in Berlin some years before, and was full of admiration for the adventurous spirit and strong sense of duty in which he had entered on his task in his new country.

So I welcomed with pleasure the opportunity of talking to him again, and walked on ahead with him, discussing all sorts of things, my mother following with the two other gentlemen. We wandered from the "Flora" to the Zoological Gardens, and after a long hunt for the monkey house, found the little creatures already installed in their winter quarters. I remember holding out my hand to one of them, rather to the horror of the Prince, who protested against seeing my finger clasped in the rough little brown paw. But the time had passed so quickly, and I found my companion's conversation so interesting,—(he said afterwards that I told him his political views were quite Machiavellian!)—two hours had gone by before we got into the carriage again, and as we drove away, I exclaimed:—"There is somebody with whom one can enjoy talking! He is really a charming young man!" My mother said nothing at all. We stopped at Mme. Schumann's, for I was determined to have a little talk with her before the evening,—merely to see her at the concert would not have satisfied me at all. The dear old days in St. Petersburg were a little brought back to me, as I sat holding her hand, and listening to all she had to tell us of what had happened since we last met. But she was somewhat depressed, having just parted with her third daughter who had recently married an Italian Count, and unable to resign herself to the separation. "Only think what it means," she said to my mother,—"to have brought up one's child, loved and cared for her all these years, and then some stranger comes along, and carries her off, one knows not to what!" Again my mother kept

silence, but I could not help thinking that there was quite a strange expression on her face. When we left, there was only just time to dress for the concert. My toilette was very hurriedly made, in spite of the satisfaction I felt in the very pretty and becoming dress—a white flowered silk over a pale blue underskirt—which I was to wear, for my one fear was of missing any of the music! But whilst I was dressing, the Prince of Roumania had been announced, and stayed, and stayed, and I could hardly control my impatience, till at last I heard him leave, and rushed to my mother, to hurry her. But the serious look with which she met me checked the impatient exclamation on my lips. Taking my arm in hers, she began to pace the room with me, saying, "The Prince of Roumania was here just now to ask you to be his wife." She stopped and looked at me, half expecting the decided refusal, with which all such proposals had hitherto been met. But instead,—"Already?" was the only word I brought out. I said to myself,—he hardly knows me, he cannot love me, he happens to have heard how well and carefully I have been brought up, he thinks I may prove the suitable companion, the fittest helpmate for him in the work he has set himself. And a thousand similar thoughts flashed like lightning through my brain. But through it all I heard my mother telling me of the high and noble mission awaiting me, should I accept the Prince's hand, of the wide field in which my energies might find scope, and the honour she accounted it that his choice should have fallen on me. As she went on talking, my hesitation seemed to fade away, and it was not

long before I said to her,—"Let him come! He is the right one!" In a very short time the Prince had returned, I was summoned to the room, and remember going towards him with my hand outstretched, which he raised to his lips, and I remember too the words he spoke; but my words to him I do not recall, though my mother treasured them in her heart, and had them engraved below my portrait she sent him. She had already sent a little word in all haste to Mme. Schumann, telling her of my betrothal, and that she must not count on us for that evening. The rest of it passed quickly indeed, the Prince having only a very few hours to spend with us, as he had to return to Paris that same night. As long as he was with us, telling me of the work we should accomplish together, of the difficulties we must encounter and overcome, so far, all was well, I had caught the fire of his enthusiasm, and felt equal to all that might be demanded of me. But no sooner was he gone, than doubts and hesitations once more assailed me. Had I not been too hasty, too precipitate, in making up my mind on a question of such importance, on which depended all the happiness of my future life? I was no longer so young, very nearly six-and-twenty, and that would perhaps make it all the harder for me, to give up my freedom and independence, resigning myself as it were to another's control. One of whom, after all, I knew so little, beyond what everyone else knew and could read of him in the newspapers! Was that a sufficient guarantee of happiness, I asked myself, that his chivalrous character pleased me, that I knew him to be the soul of honour, and that his mother had

H.M. King Charles of Roumania

ever been one of the idols of my girlhood? Unluckily too, the photograph which he had given me made him look very stern, and that quite alarmed me. I thought, if he can ever look like that, I shall be frightened to death! But I took comfort in looking at the little opal cross he had also given me, finding in the soft pure flame of the beautiful milk-white stones, a sort of presage of everything that is good and noble, and my fears gradually quieted down. Not altogether, though. They came back often during the four weeks of my engagement, and only left me entirely when I stood with my affianced husband before the altar.

With all this, alas! I never saw my dear Mme. Schumann again. I had little thought when we left her that eventful day, looking forward to meeting again the same evening at the concert, that it was the very last time we should meet on earth! I wonder if she ever guessed the extent of my affection and veneration. Two days before the wedding a concert was given in honour of the bridegroom and myself, and for this my brother tried to arrange for Mme. Schumann to come, but she was unfortunately prevented. After that I was myself so far away, plunged heart and soul in the new duties that were now to be my lifework, and so much absorbed by these, that I only returned twice to my old home in the course of the next ten years. Besides, in the meantime I had become a mother—that unspeakable happiness was mine, and then—and then it was taken from me, and all was dark around me, nevermore to become light for me henceforth on earth!

CHAPTER II

GRANDMAMMA

I CANNOT rightly remember any of my grandparents, for grandmamma, as we all called her, whom I learnt to know and love in my childhood, was in reality only my mother's stepmother, my grandfather, the Duke of Nassau's second wife. She was a daughter of the terrible Prince Paul of Wurtemberg, so notorious for the violence of his temper, and her mother was one of the lovely Princesses of Altenburg, another of whom had been my grandfather's first wife, and died in giving birth to my mother, her eighth child. As their mother was a Princess of Mecklenburg, sister to Queen Louisa of Prussia, my grandmother and the old Emperor William were first cousins.

Five years had passed since the death of his first wife, before my grandfather could be persuaded to think of marrying again, so deeply did he regret this good and amiable woman, and so happy had he been with her. But then, hearing so much said in praise of this young niece of hers, he suddenly determined to see and judge for himself, whether the good looks and other good qualities with which she was credited, should seem sufficient to compensate for the slight deafness from which she suffered. So he set off for Stuttgart incognito, even taking the precaution to disguise himself and muffle up his face, and watching his opportunity, he followed the

young princess home from church, and taking up his stand under her window, listened to her conversation with her companions, in order to find out whether her infirmity prevented her taking part in it to advantage. Her beauty and grace so enchanted him, his mind was made up at once, and throwing off the muffler that concealed his features, he stepped forth in full view of the astonished little group. There was a cry of—"Uncle Wilhelm!" from some of the young people, and then the next moment the intruder had vanished, as quickly as he came, only to re-appear a little later with all due formality, in the character of suitor for the hand of the fair young girl, whom he carried off as his bride. It was no such easy matter for her, the scarce eighteen-year-old wife, to enter her new home and take up her position there, in the house in which, but a short time since, she the young cousin had played, a child herself, with the other children. Three of these were about her own age; the two elder sons, Adolphus and Maurice, now almost grown up, and Thérèse, the eldest daughter, although only fifteen, very much spoilt and very independent, and too much accustomed to play the part of mistress of the house and have her own way in everything, to feel disposed to part with these privileges in favour of anyone else. It was therefore the very greatest comfort to the youthful stepmother to find herself warmly welcomed by the youngest member of the family, a real child still, my mother, then a little girl of five with her long fair hair falling in curls below her waist. The very warmest affection sprang up at

once between them, and lasted throughout their whole lives.

Grandmamma's own life had been anything but smooth and untroubled from her earliest years, and it is no wonder that when she one day later on sat down to write her recollections, she should have done so under the title—*Histoire de mes Peines.* Her parents' married life had been excessively unhappy; her father having even, in order to rid himself of a wife he detested, gone to the length on one occasion of actually hiding a man in her bedroom, and then bursting in upon her followed by the whole Court, in the hope that his unsuspecting victim's confusion might lend her an appearance of guilt! But his diabolical plot fell through, for, all helpless and defenceless as she was, the poor lady's innocence was perfectly evident, and her accuser's character only too well known for anyone to put faith in anything he said. It was shortly after this charming exploit that Prince Paul determined to send his daughters to school in France. I am not sure when it was exactly, whether at an earlier or later date, that he gave them into the care of such an ill-natured governess, that they had to suffer for the rest of their lives from the effects of her petty tyranny, grandmamma's deafness having been caused, she always believed, from her having been forced by her tormentor to stand sometimes for a couple of hours at a time, barefoot in her night-dress on the cold stone floor, whilst her sister Charlotte's digestion was ruined by her never being allowed to satisfy the cravings of her healthy young

appetite. They were no better off during their schooldays in France. In the establishment in which their father placed them, the spirit of the Revolution still prevailed to such an extent, that everyone of aristocratic birth was looked upon with suspicion, and as for the title of princess, to bear that was little less than a crime! So that the poor little Wurtemberg princesses had a hard time of it, mistrusted and shunned by their schoolfellows, who refused even to let them join in their games, and played all sorts of mischievous tricks on them, whilst the governesses for their part vented their dislike in imposing on them the most unsuitable tasks—even of a menial description. Not only from grandmamma herself, but also from her sister, afterwards the Grand Duchess Hélène of Russia, with whom much of my own girlhood was spent, did I hear all about this. It was she who told me how often in her sadness and loneliness she would seat herself on the stairs, to watch the movements of the hands of the big clock opposite, as if that were her only friend and companion, listening through the long dreary hours to its melancholy ticking, and counting the slow monotonous swinging of the pendulum backwards and forwards.

When the sisters returned to the Wurtemberg Court, they were as lonely as ever, for they had become strangers to everyone, including the King and Queen, during their exile. But soon, the Emperor Nicholas having seen the one, asked for her hand in marriage for his brother Michael; and thus it was that the Princess Charlotte was sent to Russia

in charge of a governess—for she was only fourteen years old—to finish her education and be received under the name of Hélène into the Orthodox Church as a preliminary to the wedding.

And so grandmamma was left alone and but for the occasional society of her two brothers, more forsaken and disconsolate than ever. It was when she was eighteen, as I have said, that a change came into her life also, with her marriage. But the husband with whom she entered her new home was no young man, he was the widower of her aunt, and she had been accustomed to regard him in the light of an uncle,—one of the older generation, rather to be respected and looked up to than to be treated as an equal. So that my grandfather need have been at no pains to inspire her with awe for his person and frighten her into submissiveness. However, that there might be no mistake at all as to the position he intended to assume, the wedding-ceremony was no sooner over, and the newly-married couple alone in their travelling carriage, than he proceeded to light his pipe, and closing the windows, smoked hard in her face for a few hours, just to see if she would venture to remonstrate or complain! Needless to say, she was too well broken in by a long course of severity, to dare to utter a word of protest, and it seems to me that had her husband but known how joyless her youth had hitherto been, he must have tried rather to cheer her and raise her spirits, than to crush her still more by the assumption of so brutal an attitude. Unfortunately in Germany the custom still prevails, of trying to keep

women in subjection. A foolish notion survives among us, that women ought to keep silence, and thus, while our wiser French neighbours demand of their women-folk to take the lead in all conversation, which they enliven and stimulate with their wit and brilliancy, the German on the other hand expects members of the other sex to be content to listen in silent admiration, needle in hand, while he holds forth ponderously on whatever subject he pleases. The natural reaction from this absurd tyranny is a sort of revolt of womankind, attended by exaggeration in the opposite direction—a tendency that certainly deprives its adherents of much of their former grace and charm, whilst it is to be questioned whether there be any compensating gain in strength. In all this we have undoubtedly fallen behind our ancestors, for in the old Germanic tribes not only was the entire rule and management of the household given up to women, but our rude forefathers also reverenced in them their best friends and counsellors, priestesses of the hearth and altar, superior beings in fact. It was only when Roman institutions had the supremacy, that the contrary opinion came into force, and was carried to the utmost extremes, it being found convenient to ascribe inferior brain-power to those who were to be reduced to subjection. I wonder if it never struck any of the wiseacres who propounded this ludicrous theory, that as the propagation of the human race can only be carried on by the co-operation of the female portion, it must, if the latter be in reality so wofully inferior, necessarily in course

of time deteriorate altogether! Surely, if they were not blinded by their own vanity, each one of these superior beings must be aware that his first youthful health and physical vigour, together probably with much of the mental and moral force on which he prides himself, were in the first instance derived from one of the sex he so looks down upon, and imbibed with his mother's milk! What is strangest of all is that women should so long have put up with being treated in this manner. Was it that they did not think it worth their while to protest, that for all these centuries they have smilingly seen through the unwarrantable pretensions of their husbands, brothers and sons, calm and confident in their own quiet strength, which must, if they but chose to put it forth, prevail against irrational blustering? To me, in any case, it would appear rather a confession of weakness on the part of some of my sisters, when I hear them clamouring for their so-called rights. Which of the old Roman legislators was it, who in helping to frame the laws which press so hardly on our sex, gave it as his reason, that unless women were firmly kept down, they would soon get the upper-hand altogether, being, as he had the courage and honesty to confess—"so much stronger and cleverer than men!"

My mother has very often told me of her joy at the arrival of the pretty new mamma, who looked so sweet, and took her in her arms so kindly, as if she felt it a real comfort to find this little one prepared to love her, and to whom she might try to be a real mother. Not quite as she would have wished

though, as she soon found out, for that would not have fallen in with my grandfather's views. He wanted his wife for himself, and expected her to be constantly in her own rooms awaiting his good will and pleasure, and not that he should perhaps be told if he went to look for her there, that she had gone upstairs to the schoolroom or nursery. It was for this reason that my mother in her turn had to continue leading a lonely life in her childhood, only seeing her parents at stated hours, and ever in the greatest dread of her father, who, if he were annoyed at anything, generally, I regret to say, laid about him with his riding-whip pretty freely. Such energetic modes of enforcing obedience or expressing disapproval were already somewhat going out of fashion in my childhood, and I am glad to think how many children there now are who have never received a blow, and are wholly free from the terrorising influences under which earlier generations grew up.

My mother's first impression of her stepmother was, as I have said, one of pure enthusiasm. She was old enough to feel the charm of a pretty face, and to observe the pride her father took in his young wife's beauty, and the intense satisfaction he felt in witnessing the admiration she excited. He was rather fond of teasing his little daughter with the prospect of very soon finding a husband for her, to which the little girl would reply quite gravely—"No, I do not mean ever to get married!" And her father would cast an enquiring glance at his wife, as if wondering whether she had the air of a

victim of the marriage yoke, to be however promptly reassured by her smile of unaffected amusement at the child's ingenuousness. Grandmamma's first baby did not live, but she had in course of time four other children, who were to the little elder sister a source of unfailing delight. She would amuse them for hours, telling them the most wonderful stories, which she made up herself, and the little ones simply adored her. For her own elder brothers my mother had, as I shall have occasion to relate, an almost passionate attachment. I must speak of them in their own place, but in this sort of family history, the lives are all so mixed up together, and have so many points of contact, one must from time to time let a side-light fall on some, whose turn to be treated at length has not yet come.

The occasional visits which the terrible Prince Paul paid his daughter were rather like the explosion of a bomb in the household. As an instance of the alarm which his presence inspired, my mother used to relate with amusement the story of her stepmother's consternation at finding her one day alone with him for a few minutes, imitating the tone of commiseration with which she said to her:—"What, all alone, poor child! Go upstairs and rest!" It was the only time that she ever heard grandmamma say a word that could imply the slightest dislike to her father. Her manner towards him was always perfect, and she never criticised his conduct.

My mother was just fourteen, grandmamma therefore only twenty-seven, when my grandfather suddenly died. Grandmamma was so inconsolable, that

for the first week she shut herself up in her own room, refusing to see anyone, and shedding floods of tears. And yet her married life cannot have been a very cheerful one. What dreary evenings those must have been, on which her husband came home tired from his shooting, and fell asleep on the sofa directly after dinner, his wife and daughters not daring to speak a word, for fear of disturbing his slumbers! Nor was it perhaps much better, to have at other times to stand the whole evening beside the billiard-table, looking on at the interminable games he played with his chamberlains. As for the visits from other Courts, these were mostly terribly stiff and formal affairs, and if, as was sometimes the case, the Rhine-steamers bringing the expected guests were delayed, then it meant several hours of tedious waiting. Standing about waiting was part of the daily business of Court life, and children were not spared, they had to do just like the rest. As for asking them if they were tired or bored, that occurred to nobody; it was the proper thing and had to be done, and that was enough.

It was only much later that I could at all appreciate what infinite tact must have been requisite on grandmamma's part, to enable her, the young widow with her little children, to take up exactly the right position towards her stepson, now Duke of Nassau, so little younger than herself. But her innate sense of the fitness of things pointed out to her exactly the right line of conduct, and it was with the most perfect womanly dignity and grace that she settled down at once into the part of the middle-aged, one

might say the elderly woman, which she had decided should henceforth be hers. She had a stately way of receiving visitors, nearly always standing, and with the doors on all sides thrown wide open. Even her doctor was accustomed to stand and talk to her, or else would walk up and down with her, hat in hand, through the rooms with their big folding-doors opening one into the other. All this perpetual living on view as it were, this lack of privacy, seemed to us then perfectly natural—one is always inclined to take the difficulties in the lives of others as a matter of course, especially if they themselves accept them unmurmuringly. So that it never even occurred to me how frightfully dull and monotonous was the life grandmamma led—just the same little round of duties and occupations day by day, a drive to the same spot at the same hour, varied only by a little walk while the carriage waited for her, and just the same set of people received in audience over and over again. There could of course never be any pleasure to her in receiving visitors, on account of her deafness, but she never let this interfere with the enjoyment of others, and nothing pleased her so much as to sit, smiling and serene, in the midst of a crowd of gay and laughing young people, whose words she could not hear, but whose bright laughing faces enabled her to share in their mirth. It is in looking back on them now, that such details throw fresh light for me on the inner meaning of that beautiful and serene, yet in reality solitary existence, and I reflect on the amount of silent endurance, the long practice in self-restraint and self-sacrifice, all

the disappointments and disenchantments, by which in the end that appearance of placid content, of sweet and smiling resignation, had been acquired.

My own happiest hours were those spent with grandmamma. Oh! how we loved everything about her!—her house,—that pretty house, standing on a hill covered with rose-trees, so that it was a perfect bower of roses during the summer months, and inside fragrant the whole year round with the perfume of the flowers that filled it everywhere! She had at first taken another house in Wiesbaden, for she insisted on moving from Biebrich directly after her husband's death, in order to give up the Castle to his eldest son, who then had this house built on purpose for her, and in it she lived the whole of her widowed life. It was called after her the "Paulinenpalais," and bore that name still for many years after her death. But now it has been sold, has passed into other hands, and retains nothing of the charm that belonged to it in grandmamma's time. How well I remember every nook and corner of it, each one endeared to me by some special association, and with grandmamma's presence pervading it all,—the drawing-room we thought so lovely, with its oriental decorations, in imitation of the Alhambra, and her dear little boudoir, with its soft blue hangings, and the delicately scented note-paper on her writing-table, of the special pale green tint she always used, for the sake of her somewhat weak eyes.

And what lovely fine crochet-work was done by those beautiful hands of hers, gloved or ungloved.

One wore gloves much more in those days, it was considered a duty to take care of one's hands, and would have been condemned as a mark of excessive ill-breeding, to hold out a hand that was not beautifully cared for, for others to kiss. Very rarely though did one give one's hand at all. It is very different now-a-days, when young princes content themselves with a silent shake of the hand, and young princesses too find nothing to say, and put it on the ground of their shyness. My mother knew what it meant to suffer from shyness, she hardly ever entered the drawing-room in her youth without having shed tears beforehand, so terrible an ordeal was it to her, but she knew what would have awaited her had she not at once gone round the circle of guests speaking to each in turn. Nor did grandmamma's deafness ever prevent her from entering into conversation with each person presented to her, finding the right thing to say to each one, whilst only her heightened colour betrayed to those who knew her well, the torture it was to her to go on talking thus, without hearing more than a chance word here and there of the other's replies. It was in her drawing-room that I took unconsciously my first lessons in deportment, her way of holding a reception seeming to me so gracious and so natural, I felt that no better model could be found. To me she was invariably of the most exquisite kindness, but I should never have taken it into my head to be otherwise than extremely respectful towards her. I was never happier than when sitting at her feet, playing with the tips of her delicate tapering fingers, which she

left in my clasp, whilst she went on conversing with the others. Sometimes she took me out for a drive, and I felt very proud at being alone with her in the carriage. "Sit very upright," she used to say, "and then people will think you are grown-up!"

But the greatest delight of all was to be allowed to be present at grandmamma's toilet, to watch her hair being dressed, and see her arrange her curls, as she always did herself, with her own hands. Her hair was coiled round at the back, and a piece of black lace hung over it, and then in the front the mass of soft little curls shaded her forehead most becomingly, after the fashion of her youth, to which she always clung. Nor did she ever change the style of her dress, during all the years of her widowhood. Her dressing-room seemed to me quite a little sanctuary, so dainty and sweet, with the delicious smell of the rose-water she used to bathe her eyes, and all the beautiful glass-stoppered bottles set out on the toilet-table, and yet there were no toilet arts or mysteries at all, nothing that need be concealed from a child's gaze.

Grandmamma often stayed with us for months together, for my mother and she were intensely fond of one another, and there was even a great likeness between them, which was not surprising, as they were first cousins. She wrote a great deal, had a special facility with her pen, and many a document for the use of her stepson was drawn up by her. French she wrote with perhaps even greater ease, always employing that language for any notes she made for her own reference, for it was of course the

language of her youth, being spoken exclusively at the German Courts in the old days. My mother also spoke it before she could speak German, hardly knowing a word of the latter language at the time of her father's second marriage.

The year 1848, so full of unrest throughout Europe, did not pass unfelt in Nassau. My uncle, the Duke, was absent when the revolution broke out, and an angry mob collected round grandmamma's palace in Wiesbaden, and even began piling faggots at every corner, with the evident intention of setting it on fire. Then when popular excitement was at the highest pitch, two or three delegates of the revolutionary party came up to demand of any members of the ducal family the signing of the new constitution. There was no time for reflection; grandmamma had to sign the paper herself, and let her son Nicholas, a boy of fourteen, do the same, and then she took up her stand on the balcony, with what outward calm she might, but in her heart longing for her stepson to return and restore order. At last, to her relief, she perceived the plumes of his helmet on the other side of the square, and soon could recognise him, in full uniform, making his way quietly on foot through the thickest of the crowd. He had heard the news of the revolution at Frankfort, and jumping on the first railway-engine that left, came back with all speed. In her joy grandmamma waved her handkerchief as a signal, and in a moment, from all the houses round, whose inmates had been watching the course of events behind closed windows, countless handkerchiefs were waving also,

notwithstanding the danger of thus attracting to oneself a shot from the insurgents. There was an anxious pause whilst the Duke came forward to the edge of the balcony, and leaning over, called down into the crowd below, in a clear and decided if not very well-pleased tone of voice,—"The engagement my mother and brother have entered into for me, I will fulfil!" The last syllable echoing across the square with cutting emphasis, as I have often been told by those who were present at the scene.

Nassau was a gem among the states of Germany. There was an alliterative saying about the sources of the country's wealth: from *water,* in the first place, for besides the Rhine flowing through it, there were all the magnificent mineral and medicinal springs; then its *wine,* the very best in Germany, and in the whole world! Next, the *woods,* of such splendid and luxuriant growth, and the home of innumerable *wild* creatures,—feathered and four-footed game of all sorts! As for *wheat,* there were corn-fields in abundance, enclosed by fruit trees, whose branches were drooping with their load; and last, though not least, the *ways,* those roads for which the land was famous,—the so-called vicinal ways,—were as good as the finest highways elsewhere. With all this, rates and taxes were things unknown, in that fortunate country, in those halcyon days. The state was prosperous, the reigning family wealthy, and any deficit in the revenue was supplied by the gaming-tables at Wiesbaden. As these were only open to foreigners, neither the townspeople nor the innocent countryfolk around were ever exposed to the

temptations and dangers so eloquently set forth in certain pamphlets. There, the misery of the peasantry is depicted in moving terms,—honest families reduced to the direst poverty after losing their little all in the gambling-saloons! But it so happened that no peasant was ever admitted inside the doors, or had he succeeded in gaining entrance, he would very speedily have been turned out, before he had time even to watch the play, much less stake his own money! An officer in the army seen there would have been immediately cashiered, nor was access to the tables granted to any magistrate or functionary, or to anyone belonging to the territory. It is not that I wish to undertake the defence of gambling, but, apart from the question of its intrinsic immorality, so much that is erroneous has been written on the subject and has come to my own notice, that I cannot refrain from stating here the facts of the case, as they are known to me. For Nassau it may emphatically be said, that the institution only benefited the country, very materially adding to its prosperity, without doing it any harm at all.

On rainy days, our favourite walk was under the arcades, where we wandered up and down, looking in at the shop windows, that seemed to me an Eldorado, with all the treasures they displayed. And never shall I forget my sensations, the day that for the first time I possessed a whole thaler of my own, to spend as I liked! I drove with grandmamma to the Arcade, and we got out there, that I might make my purchase. Now I had long since set my heart

on the loveliest little basket, lined with pink silk, which I had often gazed at with longing eyes, thinking it quite an unattainable object. "That costs a gulden," said the shopkeeper, in answer to my somewhat embarrassed question, for it seemed to me rather an indelicate thing to ask the price of anything, a feeling I have not altogether got over to this day. A gulden! my spirits sank. "Ah! I have only a thaler!" "But that is a great deal too much," replied the friendly shopman, with whom I was delighted, as in addition to my purchase, he handed me back numberless little coins, with which I at once bought several other charming knicknacks. For I could not tolerate the idea of taking a single pfennig home with me. To have money in one's pocket seemed to me already then a real misfortune, and I have never changed in that respect. How should one change? Does one not remain the same from the cradle to the grave? And what a number of pretty little things I had for my money! Some of them I have to this day, for I could not bear to part with them, and brought them with me to Roumania.

The year 1856 saw us for the last time all assembled round grandmamma, in the month of February, to celebrate her forty-fifth birthday. I was just twelve years old, but already so familiar with the outward signs of ill-health and sickness, that the change in her appearance at once astonished and even disquieted me. It was the strange bright patch of red on each cheek that struck me especially. Her complexion had always remained brilliant, and her

cheeks rosy, but now they were much redder, and seemed to be encircled by a hard line that made the skin around look whiter than ever. I think she had also a little dry hacking cough. It soon became evident that her lungs were attacked, her fits of coughing were accompanied by hemorrhage, and the doctors pronounced her to be in a decline. We saw but little of my mother that spring and summer, as she was constantly in Wiesbaden, the invalid always asking for her, and liking no other nursing so well as hers. Already early in July it was announced that there was no longer any hope, and my mother, whose perpetual dread it was that my naturally impulsive nature should gain more and more the upper hand, counting on the solemn impressions of such a scene to sober me for life, resolved to take me with her to the death-bed.

Such an experience was indeed well calculated to damp a child's high spirits, and it remains with me as the most vivid recollection of my youth. For accustomed as I was to sickness and suffering, death I was yet unacquainted with. And now, all at once, I was to see someone die! But what a radiant, blissful death that was! The evening before she passed away, grandmamma seemed positively transfigured. A rapturous expression was on her face, as she lay there stretching out her arms towards something that was seen by her alone, and repeating with marked emphasis the words "at four o'clock!" For many hours we all sat or knelt round her bed, until at last my mother sent me away to get a little sleep, promising to have me awakened when the end

approached. I stopped to press my lips once more to the dear wasted hand, and at that grandmamma opened her eyes, looked at me and smiled, and her lips shaped themselves as if to give me a kiss. My eyes were running over with tears, as I stooped over her for that last kiss. Even then, almost in her death-agony, her natural sweetness and affability never deserted her for a moment, and as with her failing eyes she caught sight of a doctor who had been summoned in haste, with one of her own peculiarly graceful gestures she pointed to a chair by her bedside, begging him to be seated.

Meanwhile, in the next room, still, in my little dressing-gown I had thrown myself on a camp-bedstead that had been placed there for anyone able to snatch a few minutes' rest, and had fallen into an uneasy sleep, until a little before four o'clock my mother woke me, everyone thinking that the end must come then.

In these few hours I found that a great change had taken place,—still the same hot flush on the cheeks, but the eyes sunken, and without the slightest look of consciousness, and her breath coming in short quick gasps. I trembled all over. Through the door open into the boudoir beyond, I could see the old clergyman, Pastor Dilthey, who had officiated both at my mother's confirmation and at her marriage, sitting there in his full canonicals, grave and imposing, waiting to perform the last solemn rites. The room was left in darkness, only the first rays of morning stealing in through the closed shutters flickered strangely here and there, and fell over the

old pastor's silvery hair, making his pale serious face look still more grave and pale. I watched him from the doorway, but felt in too great awe to go up and speak to him, so I stole up quietly to grandmamma's writing-table, and looked once more at all the little articles standing on it, with which I had sometimes been allowed to play and all of which had the scent of the filagree vinaigrettes she kept among them. The hands of the little clock there already pointed to four,—when she suddenly began to breathe a little more freely, and the danger seemed no longer so imminent. We knelt round her bed, without a sound, except when one or other of her daughters, unable to control her sobs, was immediately called to order by my mother lest the calm of the death-bed should be disturbed.

And so the hours passed. I grew more and more tired. Then, between one and two o'clock that afternoon, a terrific storm broke out. The open windows banged to and fro, the rain splashed and dashed against the window-panes, the thunder rolled, and grandmamma's breath came in fitful gasps. She could no longer swallow even the few drops of water that were held to her lips. So the storm raged on, and her breathing grew more painful and irregular, and I knelt on like the rest at her bedside, when suddenly I knew no more, all grew dark before my eyes, and I had fallen forward, my dark curls streaming across my mother's feet, fast asleep. Or was it perhaps in reality faintness that had overcome me, and that then passed into the sound sleep of childhood, worn out as I was with the

unwonted hours of watching and fasting I had gone through? It is very possible, for I had eaten nothing for the last four-and-twenty hours, and was exhausted with kneeling and with all the tears I had shed. When I came to myself again, the storm had spent its fury, the flashes of lightning were less frequent, the thunder only went on rumbling in the distance, the rain had stopped, and a ray of sunshine streamed into the room and right across the face of the dying woman, whose breathing was still slower and feebler. At last, as the big belfry clocks in the town began to strike the hour, one after the other, there were still longer pauses between the gasps for breath. I saw then for the first time what it means to smile from sheer despair. Good old Dr. Fritze, who had attended grandmamma all her life, and who literally idolised her, had seated himself on the bed and lifted her in his arms, to try to ease her breathing a little. When the clocks began striking, he smiled, and said aloud,—"one more breath!" and then,—"one more!" And again:—"and just one more!" And after that there was a deathly silence, whilst the old Black Forest clock above her head struck four. Her daughters hid their faces in the pillows to stifle their sobs, and the deep rich voice of the old pastor rang out in words of solemn prayer. Then the head of the family, the Duke of Nassau, rose to his feet, and stretching out his hand across the sleeping form, called on his brother and sisters to unite with him in the vow, that her dear memory should hold them together in all things henceforth, just as if she were still living

in their midst. Their tears fell fast over the still white face, so unmoved in death, as they joined hands with him in answer to his appeal. The one daughter, the Princess of Waldeck, was so beside herself with grief, that it took all my mother's firmness to enable her to regain her composure, the latter being indeed a tower of strength to them all in that sad hour.

After a little while we were all sent away, in order that the laying out of the corpse might be attended to, before too great rigidity should have set in, and once more I became sadly conscious of the shortcomings of human nature, at least in my own person, as the pangs of hunger began to assert themselves, after this prolonged fast. It was perhaps not very astonishing, considering my youth, that I should have been able to enjoy even at such a moment the repast which was now provided for me, but I felt terribly ashamed of myself, above all that the servants waiting on me should see me eating with such hearty appetite, and I wondered if everyone thought me very hard-hearted! Had I not fallen asleep just at the wrong moment too? I felt thoroughly small, and there was no one to comfort me with the assurance that it was not my heart that was in fault, but only my poor little body demanding its rights!

In the one drawing-room, that which was known as the "sisters'-room," as it had specially belonged to my aunts, three beds were put up, and here my mother and I were to sleep together with her youngest sister, for the house was so overfull that proper accommodation was wanting, the dining-room, the

largest room of all, being converted into a *chapelle ardente*. Of this last detail I knew nothing. I had been so simply brought up, the ways of a Court were unfamiliar and even quite distasteful to me. Next morning I was up betimes, and without disturbing anyone I crept out into the garden, taking with me the first tablecloth that came to hand, and this I filled with all the roses I could gather, fresh fragrant roses, still wet with dew, to take to grandmamma. Without a word to anyone, I made my way upstairs very softly to her room, and began placing my roses in a big garland round her. I did not feel at all afraid at first, but in course of time the intense stillness began to affect me, so that I was quite glad when Fräulein von Preen, grandmamma's lady-in-waiting, came into the room with one or two of the maids and helped me to arrange my flowers. The day passed slowly, chiefly taken up with giving orders for mourning, bonnets of the correct shape, with the point coming very low down on the forehead, and long crape veils, falling right over the heavy folds of the black woollen dresses with their long trains. I too was to have a little black woollen dress, and that made me sadder than ever, it seemed to me such a melancholy garb. The following morning I again got up as early as possible, feeling rather impatient to see my aunt go on sleeping so soundly, for she was never an early riser, and had not yet made up for the rest she had lost. But I hardly knew what to do with myself, having been told that I could not go to see grandmamma to-day, and I turned and twisted about restlessly in the room.

All at once I caught sight of a sheet of grandmamma's own special pale green note-paper, with something written on it in her hand-writing, lying on a table. Young as I was, I quite understood that one must not read every paper one sees lying about, my mother never even opened a letter addressed to me, so as to set me the example of the respect due to private correspondence. But this paper lay spread wide open for every one to see, and was evidently not a letter at all, that much was clear to me, notwithstanding my short-sight. It was certainly allowable, I told myself, to look at dear grandmamma's hand-writing once more. It turned out to be a translation of some English verses,—a poem of Longfellow's, which is known to everybody, but with which I first made acquaintance then, through the medium of grandmamma's German version. The first verse of the original runs:

> The day is cold, and dark, and dreary,
> It rains, and the rain is never weary;
> The vine still clings to the mouldering wall,
> And at every gust the dead leaves fall,
> And the day is dark and dreary.

Quick as thought I had made a copy of the verses, and leaving the paper where I found it, I was reading my treasure through once more when my aunt awoke and called her sister, and it was only then that I noticed that my mother must have been up and dressed before me, as she had already left the room. Thrusting my beloved verses back in my pocket, I softly approached my aunt's bedside, wishing her good morning.—"Good morning!" she replied, con-

tinuing with a sigh:—"to-day is my birthday!"—"Oh!" I said, and could find no more to say. I felt perfectly well how unkind and unfeeling I must appear, I quite understood how tragic it was for her, to celebrate her eighteenth birthday beside her mother's open coffin, I was simply choking with affection and sympathy—but I could not get out a single word to express what I felt. And what indeed could a small child say to help and console! Myself I had just found great comfort in those beautiful verses, and I longed to show her these, but was not quite sure whether I had done right in copying them, and so my poor aunt and I just went on looking at one another in silence, when fortunately my mother came in, breaking the ice with the warmth of her presence, and, finding exactly the right thing to say, in the fewest words possible, as she folded her sister in her arms. I withdrew, very quietly, leaving them together, and that was perhaps the only sensible thing that I did, or could have done, under the circumstances.

The next few days were the most gloomy and depressing of all, with the lying in state in the *chapelle ardente,* in which grandmamma seemed to have become something so distant and removed from me, all shrouded in lace, and with tapers burning round her, high up and scarcely to be seen from the steps of the catafalque on which we could only kneel and pray—no longer my own dear grandmamma round whom I might strew roses, but something cold and strange, and far-off, at which crowds came to stare—a mere show! I wanted to think of her still

as I had seen her the evening before her death, glorified, as it were, and already belonging to that other and better world, on the threshold of which she stood; it was on this picture my thoughts loved to dwell, and on the memory of her last kiss, and of the magnificent storm which raged while she was drawing her last breath. Everything that had come afterwards was dull and commonplace in comparison—a pageant, out of which the loftiness and sanctification had departed! Out of this chilling atmosphere I withdrew then more and more into myself, cherishing these sacred recollections, and above all musing over my priceless treasure, the poem I had discovered, and which seemed to me like a message from grandmamma herself; so much must the words have meant to her, I fancied I could hear her voice speaking through them; and so little heed did I in consequence pay to what was going on around me, that of the actual funeral ceremonies, at some portion of which in any case I must have been present, I have no remembrance at all. I must have passed through it all as if in a dream, and there is altogether a blank in my mind concerning it.

Aunt Sophie, the youngest sister of my mother, returned with us to Monrepos, and took up her abode with us for a time. She became betrothed, still in her deep mourning, to the Prince of Sweden, who suddenly made his appearance in our midst, I could not at all make out why. And I was just as much puzzled to know why, one evening when my aunt and Fräulein von Bunsen were playing Haydn's "Seven Words from the Cross," as arranged by Neukomm

for piano and organ, the prince should so persistently have kept his eyes fixed on my aunt, who was only playing the piano, whilst as everyone knows, the organ, which Fräulein von Bunsen was playing, is the far more important part! He, however, never took his gaze off my aunt, who certainly looked very interesting with her well cut profile thrown up by the long black veil. Later on I understood a little better what it meant, after I had heard him sing "Adelaïde" to my aunt's accompaniment, with all the power of his fine tenor voice, and with a fervour of expression which I have never heard since.

Life seemed to go on again then just as before, only dear grandmamma's place was empty. I remember too, being present when the question of her tombstone was being discussed. It had been her especial desire, not to be put inside a vault, but to be buried under the open sky, and it seemed to me that it was a very poor way of carrying out her wish, if after all a great heavy stone monument were to be raised above her, on which no flowers could ever grow, nor the sunshine and the rains of heaven penetrate it. Only of course my opinion was not asked, and I kept it to myself, not at all convinced by the explanation given, that the grave, if left open to the sky, and not covered by any sort of tombstone, would in course of time look very neglected and uncared for. What a much better plan it were, to keep the houses, or at any rate the rooms, which people have lived in, sacred to their memory, by leaving them just as they were when they inhabited them, filled with the spirit of the past! That would be a true

and living monument, and would speak with far greater eloquence than all the epitaphs and inscriptions, so soon effaced and forgotten.

With regard to myself, my mother had certainly accomplished the purpose she had in view, perhaps even more fully than she had intended, my natural tendency to melancholy, which seldom showed itself on the surface, being fostered and encouraged by events of such gravity. The poetic impulse grew stronger, but was kept just as secret as all the rest of my inner life. I was always writing verses, trying my hand even at a novel, and now to all the old ideals stirring confusedly within me, new visions from without came flashing across my brain, suggested by the scenes of death and mourning I had just passed through. I saw again the dimly lighted chamber, the first rays of dawn stealing through upon the silvery hair and motionless form of the old pastor, and playing over all the inanimate objects, that seemed to take no part in what was going on. And yet—had not her own little clock stood still at the hour of four? *That* then had known and understood! But I told no one my impressions and sensations, my deepest and strongest feelings I had ever been accustomed to keep to myself, it being impossible to me to overcome the reserve that, unfortunately for me, accompanied so highly-strung and impulsive a temperament. The effort to unlock my soul would have cost me too much, and I felt instinctively that to impart its tumult, even had I been able to do so, would have been by no means a welcome proceeding to those around me. It was all too

strong, too wild, too violent. So I shut myself up as before, and went on living in a world of my own, very much more true and real, it seemed to me, than the outer world, in which most of my fellow-creatures were content to live.

Before the year was over, my father's mother was also dead. But I had never known her,—her mind had been affected for many years, and none of us ever saw her. So that I could not mourn for her, as for the grandmamma I had known and loved, and it was to the latter my thoughts flew back once more, as I knelt beside the coffin of her who had once ruled, as wife and mother, in the home to which she now only returned for her last long slumber. It was for her I wept again, rather than for this unknown grandmother, sorrow for whom was also somewhat crushed by the funeral pomp and ceremony. It left me merely a little sadder and more thoughtful than before, as having had yet another lesson in the vanity of all earthly things.

CHAPTER III

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT

A more fiery soul than that of Ernst Moritz Arndt can surely never have lived upon this earth. He must have been fully eighty years old at the time when I knew him, but age seemed to count for nothing with him. His eye was as bright, his voice as clear and ringing, his gait as quick and elastic as had he still been in the prime of life, and the most impassioned speech from youthful lips would have seemed tame and cold beside the lava-flood of eloquence that poured forth inexhaustibly from his kindly and expressive, although perfectly toothless mouth. The loss of his teeth was indeed the only real sign of age Arndt bore on his person, and it was apparently a matter of so little moment to him, that I have often wondered since, whether our modern practice of repairing by artificial means the ravages of time, be after all so unquestionable an advantage as some would pretend. The mouth which nature alone has moulded year by year seems to me to retain in any case much more character and expression than that which has been fitted out and shaped anew by the dentist's skill. However that may be, it is certain that Arndt at all events felt not in the least inconvenienced by the loss, nor did it detract from our pleasure in listening to him.

It was during our stay in Bonn, whither we had migrated in order to be near a celebrated doctor,

that we saw the venerable poet so constantly. Two years of my childhood were spent in the charming little University town, in the hope that my younger brother, an invalid from his birth, and my mother, whose health then gave much cause for anxiety, might both of them derive great and lasting benefit from the treatment of the great specialist. And if these hopes were doomed to disappointment,—and it seemed indeed, as an old friend of our family afterwards remarked, as if the very best efforts of medical skill must here for ever prove unavailing,—there were on the other hand certain compensations attendant on our stay, in the shape of the opportunities for intercourse it afforded with so many highly interesting people. And first and foremost among these Arndt must be reckoned, as the most constant and ever welcome guest. His visits were indeed of quite unconventional length, for he would often stay for hours at a time, now reading aloud to my mother one of her favourite Swedish books, now relating to us children some thrilling episode of the War of Liberation, in which he had played so conspicuous a part.

He was of such exuberant vivacity, that he talked till he literally foamed at the mouth, and gesticulated wildly, sometimes enforcing what he said by a little friendly tap on my mother's shoulder, that made her shrink,—for in her weak condition, the merest touch sufficed to bring on one of her nervous attacks,—sometimes contenting himself with pressing a heavy finger on my forehead, as I sat on his knee, and gazed up in his face. I was all eyes and

ears, drinking in his words with that undivided attention that only children can give, and myself all on fire with excitement. For he talked and talked, working himself up into as burning a fever as if the French had still been in the land, and Germany smarting under a foreign yoke, and poor Queen Louisa still fretting her heart out for her country's misfortunes! It was all so real, so present for him! He lived back in those days once more, and fought the old campaigns over again, and was for ever contriving some new plan for his country's salvation and welfare,—now inventing some marvellous new weapon that should rid her of all her foes,—now devising some infallible means of making her strong and united! For the dream of German Unity never abandoned him, and there was nothing made him so wild with indignation as for anyone to dare to assert that Germany was a mere geographical expression.

Small wonder that we children listened with beating hearts and cheeks aflame to the story of the stirring times, still so near to the elder generation, members of our family too being yet alive, great-aunts and great-uncles among us to that day, who had also lived through them, and the very walls of our castle at Neuwied still bearing the marks of the bullets, fired against it by the soldiers of General Hoche. But better still, Arndt would often recite to us some of his own poems, both from the earlier ones, written during the war, and from those of more recent date, all of them glowing with the same patriotic fervour, and kindling a like enthusiasm in the minds of his youthful hearers.

There were, however, fortunately other influences at work, to combat what might have been a somewhat one-sided teaching, and prevent us from believing that our old friend possessed a monopoly of patriotism. In the first place, there was Monsieur Monnard, the very interesting French professor at the university, whose refinement of speech and quiet manner were in their way quite as effective and convincing as Arndt's stormy vehemence, and lent a peculiar charm to his conversation. To his daughter too, a most charming creature, I owed a debt of gratitude for one of the chief joys of my childhood, that delightful book "Augustin," in which she had told the story, as I afterwards heard, of her own child whom she had lost. When I made her acquaintance, I had read her book a hundred times, and almost knew it by heart! And besides these two, whose love of their country was none the less intense, I felt, for being very calmly expressed, there was another frequent guest in whom that sentiment was evidently the ruling passion and guiding principle in life. The last-mentioned, Demetrius Stourdza, was a slight, spare, very dark young man, who had come from a far-off, and to me then quite unknown country, to pursue his studies at the university, whilst his two younger brothers followed the classes at the gymnasium or public school. When he spoke of his home on the distant Moldau, of his oppressed, unhappy country, it was in terms of the same ardent affection, the same irrepressible emotion, as were Arndt's in telling the story of Germany's wrongs; only the ills of which the young

student had to tell dated much further back and were so deeply rooted as to appear well nigh incurable. Not only had his country groaned for centuries under foreign tyranny, but she was also torn by internal feuds, split into two provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia, constantly warring one with the other, so that there seemed little prospect of national independence being attained. He spoke with great enthusiasm of his mother-tongue, the beautiful Roumanian language, common heritage of the two provinces, and I remember how, at my mother's request, he one day spoke a few words of Roumanian, to let us hear the soft melodious sounds. Years after, on my first arrival in Roumania, when the train drew up in the station at Bucarest, the first person to step forward from the crowd waiting on the platform to greet me, was Demetrius Stourdza, my old acquaintance in his student days at Bonn, afterwards to be more than once Prime Minister. I certainly, at the time I am speaking of, little foresaw this second meeting, but what did strike me then was the strength and depth of this stranger's attachment to his country, perhaps all the stronger and deeper for being coupled with such hopelessness. All these things made a profound impression on my childish mind, and gave me much to reflect upon. For even then I was already dreaming,—wild heedless creature as I was generally supposed to be, and as I had come to consider myself. So strong a hold had this belief taken of me, that nothing could well equal my surprise, when some forty years later, meeting one of the companions of these early days, and asking

Photo by Photochrom Co.

ROYAL PALACE AT BUCAREST

her to tell me how I had appeared to her then, she replied without hesitation,—"Most terribly serious!" For the moment I was perfectly amazed; but, looking back once more on the past, and taking into account the lively recollection I have retained, not merely of scenes and events, but also of persons whom I met, and above all of the conversations that went on around me from my eighth to my tenth year, the conviction is forced upon me, that I must have brought to bear on them very close attention, and an amount of discernment hardly compatible with the character of careless high spirits with which I was usually credited.

To return to Arndt: it was only natural that, whatever might arrest our attention elsewhere, his personality remained the dominating one and was invested for us with a sort of halo. Had he not himself taken part in the deeds he told us of, and known and immortalised the heroes by whom the best of these were accomplished,—in songs we knew by heart and sang almost before we could speak plainly? At that time, I had never heard of the tragedy which darkened his domestic life,—that he had known little happiness in his own family, and had on one occasion treated one of his sons with such harshness, that the young man went out and threw himself into the Rhine, his body being afterwards sought for in vain for three days and nights by the distracted parents. Of all this I knew nothing then,—I saw in him only the patriot, the poet, the magician who could work such marvels with words. It was a revelation to me, this of the wondrous power of

language, and of all the lessons I unconsciously learned at that early age it was perhaps the one that I most readily and thoroughly assimilated, being the most congenial to my own nature, and corresponding to its potential needs. It is a pity that children are generally so reserved and reticent, for a child of enquiring mind would learn much more, could it but impart its own thoughts and enquire about the things that puzzle it. But a sensitive child broods in silence over its own imaginings, very often perplexed by some very simple matter which a word might explain. And who indeed could have guessed that these were the first stirrings of the poetic temperament within me, called into life by the personality of the aged poet, towards whom I felt myself irresistibly drawn? Poetry was certainly my native element. I could already recite Schiller's *Diver* and the *Fight with the Dragon,* and the other principal ballads; I learnt by heart with the greatest facility, and to hear a short poem read over once was enough, I could repeat it without a mistake. It was so much inflammable material, one might say, collected within my brain, and awaiting but the approach of the lighted match to ignite, and kindle to a blaze.

I wish I could remember some of Arndt's own words to quote here. But of that verbal brilliancy, that inexhaustible flow of speech, it is necessarily the general impression that remains, rather than the exact form in which it was cast, and I would not dare attempt to render this. Some of his more humorous sayings, however, I have preserved textually, and need therefore not hesitate to give the

following specimen:—"When I write to the King," he one day explained,—"I do not trouble my head with all that rubbish of humbly and dutifully, and most gracious this and most gracious that, but simply say Your Majesty, and then plain you and your, and afterwards perhaps just one more Majesty to wind up with—for all the absurd rigmarole of Court lingo is more than I can stand."

To the very last Arndt was busy and eager, as I have said, for the cause of German Unity, and we were all heart and soul with him in wishing well to that cause. The year 1848 had not long gone past, with all its unrest, and with the high hopes and dazzling day dreams it had brought, and from one of those dreams we had hardly awakened yet,—that which we dreamt as we saw folk going about wearing their black, red and yellow cockades, as if by so doing they could bring all Germany under one flag and place the Imperial crown on the head of the Prussian king. From the balcony at Heidelberg my little four-year-old brother had helped to give the word of command to the volunteers mustered in the square below, but all that excitement had died out again, and things had drifted back into the old well-worn grooves. The times were not yet ripe, and much water would have to flow down the Rhine to the sea, ere that fair dream should become reality. Clever and interesting as the Prussian king undoubtedly was, it was not in his person that the traditions of the German Empire were to be revived; that was to be the work of another, of whom at that period no one thought,—the exile who was then looking down

sadly and wearily from his window upon a London street.

To conclude this brief sketch of Arndt, I can hardly do better than transcribe the verses which about this time he wrote in my mother's album:

In God's own image thou wast made;
Of Heaven's pure light an emanation,
That down to this dark world has strayed.
'Tis this Heaven's truest revelation.

Nor for thyself alone was lent
Yon ray that lights thy path thus kindly;
Each as the other's guide was meant,
Here where all grope and struggle blindly.

Still to thy dream of Heaven hold fast!
For then, whatever ills assail thee,
Though every earthly joy fly past,
This one sure hope shall never fail thee!

Bonn, 23. *of the May-month*, 1853.

CHAPTER IV

BERNAYS

Another much valued friend of ours was the great scholar Bernays. He also was a constant visitor whilst we were living in Bonn, often sitting for hours beside my mother's invalid couch, talking to her. But he never partook of a meal in our house, and my childish mind was much troubled at this. His explanation was, that being a Jew, he must avoid being drawn into anything contrary to the customs and observances of his race. For his conscientious scruples, no less than for his profound learning and the breadth and liberality of his views, my parents entertained the very highest respect and admiration, my mother in particular never wearying of hearing him discourse on one or other of those deeper problems that will forever occupy men's minds, rejoicing meanwhile to feel her own store of knowledge increase and her intelligence expand in this congenial atmosphere.

Bernays was not merely well-read in the Jewish Scriptures, but seemed to know the New Testament also better than we did ourselves, and his ideas on religious topics were always striking and impressive. I did not then know of his intimate friendship with Ernest Renan, and of the correspondence they kept up. I was indeed at this time considered much too young to be admitted even as a listener to the long and serious conversations—of such absorbing

interest to both my parents—that took place between them and Bernays. The latter, I have since heard, felt it a great hardship that he should be excluded, on account of his nationality, from holding a professorship at the University, and this in spite of his being in his own line probably the finest scholar Bonn has ever produced. As for my own childish impression, I confess that it was chiefly one of awe at the solemn, rather severe-looking personage, whose eyes seemed to wear an expression of such unchanging gravity behind their dark spectacles. He was in point of fact much too short-sighted to see other faces clearly, and thus no ray of recognition ever lit up his own.

It was on account of his short-sightedness, and the nervousness that arose from it, that my mother always insisted on sending a manservant, carrying a lantern, to accompany Bernays home, whenever he had spent the evening with us. For the streets of Bonn were by no means brilliantly illuminated in those days. Whenever full moon was down in the almanack, then very few street lamps were lit. But certainly the moonlight nights were of exceptional loveliness. Our villa, which was called the Vinea Domini, had a beautiful big garden, sloping right down to the banks of the Rhine. Many and many an evening was spent on the terrace in the moonshine, watching the boats glide past, and it was hardly ever before the last steamer came puffing along, that the party broke up. "Here comes the late boat!" was a sort of standing joke, used as a signal for departure by more intimate friends, to-

wards guests inclined to tarry perhaps all too long. On such occasions, when the conversation threatened to spin itself out into the small hours of the night, and my mother began to look tired out, someone—and more often than not it was Prince Reuss, the future ambassador, then young and full of high spirits—would call out: "Here is the evening boat," and the assembly would at last disperse. To the minds of all who took part in those pleasant gatherings, the remembrance of the pretty house, with its sweet garden, must have been endeared. But they alas! no longer exist; have long since disappeared, and the ground has been cut up and built over.

I was too young at that time, as I have said, to be allowed to hear much of the discussions that went on, and I have often thought since that it was a pity that I should have missed the chance of profiting by them. For, child as I was, I was studious and thoughtful beyond my years, and being of a naturally devout temperament, which was fostered by our pious training, I would have given much to hear my parents' learned friend, whom they held in such unbounded veneration, expound his views on religion. It would have been worth still more, I have often said to myself since, to hear one so remarkable discourse, could they but have been brought together, with those kindred spirits, Renan and Tolstoi! As it was, of the rich spiritual feast set forth in such profusion, it was but a few crumbs that fell to my share. I cannot therefore profess to quote from memory Bernays's precise words on any occa-

sion, and should be the more diffident of the attempt, since he is no longer in this world, to correct any mistake I might inadvertently make. But very many of his arguments and inferences remained with me, together with a very clear apprehension of their general scope and tendency. Of the dogmatic value attaching to these, it is not for me to decide; but it would have been impossible for me, in chronicling these memories of my childhood, not to give full prominence to the striking personality whose teaching exercised so unbounded an influence over the minds of my parents, whilst in my own its mere echoes may possibly have aroused the first interest in the philosophy of religion, which I have retained throughout my life. For long years his opinion was constantly cited in our family circle;—"Bernays said this," or, "Bernays would have thought so and so," were phrases of daily recurrence, and carried with them the authority of an oracle.

It was a favourite assertion of Bernays, that the Jewish is the only religion which has kept itself free from any taint of fetichism; Christianity, like every other religion which is bent on proselytising, having been powerless to avoid contamination from the beliefs and practices of heathen nations, among whom its first converts were made. Is there not perhaps some truth in this contention? Is it not the weak point in the armour of every Faith that lays itself out for propaganda, that it is insensibly betrayed into making concessions, and thereby inevitably in the long run falls away from its lofty ideals! Chris-

tianity, we must own with shame, has lowered its standard since the days when its first teachings flowed, pure and untarnished, from the lips of its Divine Founder. And were we, who call ourselves Christians, to measure our thoughts and actions by the pattern set before us in the Sermon on the Mount, must we not blush at our own short-comings?

It was certainly by no means incomprehensible to me, that our friend should have taken it so ill, when his own brother became a Christian. On that point I have always had, I own, very much the feeling of the Roumanians, whose dislike to any change of religion is so thorough and intense, that they use the same expression—"s a' turcit,"—*i.e.,* "he has become a Turk, a Mahomedan," indiscriminately to denote any change of faith, whether on the part of one becoming a Christian or a Mussulman. Quite different in this from their Russian brethren of the Orthodox Church, the Roumanians view with absolute disfavour the action of those who join their communion. To them such an act is always simply apostasy, and their language possesses no other term by which to designate it. In this, as I was saying, I am much in sympathy with them. Is it not an admission of weakness, to say the least, deliberately to abandon the Faith of our Fathers and enter another fold? Since all Churches are in a sense human institutions, what advantage have we in leaving the one in which we were born and brought up, only to find that of our choice equally fallible and imperfect! Should we not content ourselves with doing our very best, in all honesty and

sincerity of purpose, within the community in which our lot is cast, striving to raise its aims and purify its ordinances, rather than impatiently to fling aside fetters that have perhaps become irksome, only by so doing to burden ourselves with other and perchance heavier chains, and from which we must no longer seek to free ourselves, seeing that they are of our own choosing? Is then the outward form under which we worship God, of so much importance after all? Some form undoubtedly there must be, as long as human beings meet together for prayer and praise, feeling themselves thereby more fitly disposed for their orisons and thanksgiving; but let us not forget that the essence of all service consists in its being performed "in spirit and in truth!" The rest matters little.

In the home that is now mine, Nathan the Wise might be welcomed daily, he would find here members of widely differing confessions dwelling together in harmony in one family. Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, each respects the other's faith, and never has the slightest discord arisen. As for the children, they have certainly never had occasion to feel, that the creed in which they are being brought up in any way differs from that of their elders. And in our household there is an Israelite to be reckoned among our secretaries, and he it is who is my most faithful auxiliary in all charitable work. So that of religious intolerance or narrow-mindedness it can surely never be question among us, and I have been able to live on here true to the lessons and traditions of my youth. Nor can any

accusation of having recently either sanctioned or connived at the so-called persecution of the Jews, be equitably brought against the Roumanian government. What really took place was this. In this sparely populated country, in which all industries and manufactures are in the hands of foreigners,—notably of the Jews,—a succession of bad harvests, after causing indescribable suffering in agricultural districts, at length made itself felt in the commercial centres also. There had been no crops, and consequently no food for man or beast, no work done on the land for years, and there was no money forthcoming; as a result trade naturally suffered, and to such an extent that numbers of the traders—not merely Jews, but Catholics and Protestants also—left the land. They were not driven away, except by the same untoward circumstances that pressed so heavily on the whole nation; they emigrated voluntarily from a land which could no longer afford them the means of subsistence. As long as it was merely the peasantry who were starving, all Europe looked on with the greatest indifference, perhaps even in ignorance of what was going on; but directly the consequences of those years of famine began to affect the commercial and industrial classes, then all Europe was in an uproar.

If, however, to this last story of persecution an emphatic denial may be given, it by no means follows that I would condone the cruel treatment to which in bygone centuries Jews have constantly been subjected, at the hands of their Christian brethren. Perhaps those very persecutions have served a little

to make them what they are,—so strong, so united, so self-reliant. Another source of strength has lain in the absence of all missionary zeal that characterises Judaism. Never have its followers either desired or sought to induce other nations to espouse their belief. The hatred therefore with which they often inspire these others has less its origin in religious fanaticism than in instinctive antagonism of race. Religious wars have often been but a name and a pretext under which the stronger, fundamental, racial antagonism has asserted itself, and in this case their bitterness has been intensified by the quiet tenacity, the unfailing resource, the indomitable energy and absolute cohesion of the numerically weaker and disadvantageously situated party. No nation can enjoy seeing the stranger within its gates flourishing to the detriment of the children of the soil, and the jealousy, suspicion and dislike which the prosperity of the former excites, has perhaps not infrequently been in direct ratio to the inability of the latter to turn their own natural advantages to equally good account. Were it not wiser on our part, instead of pursuing senseless animosities, to learn from the people we have too long despised and perhaps unduly mistrusted, the secret of their success, the lesson of courage, endurance, of steadfast faith in God, which has preserved them through all dangers, as living witnesses to His power and goodness?

If to this end we study with renewed attention the history of the Jewish race, we find all the qualities that constitute their strength concentrated and car-

ried to the highest pitch in the person of one man, the wisest and greatest perhaps of whom any nation can boast, and to whose almost superhuman talents and energies the very survival of his nation must be attributed. The debt owed to Moses by his fellow-countrymen can hardly be over-estimated. Lawgiver and judge, physician and priest, their leader in war and peace, where has there ever been the monarch who could compare with this marvellously gifted individual, founder of a religion, of a Code, of a nation, that has victoriously withstood all perils, and outlived the mighty empires by which it was overthrown and oppressed. Cæsar, Charlemagne and Haroun-al-Rashid, wise and powerful as they may have been, must each yield the palm to Moses, for their work has left no trace, the ideals to which they devoted their lives are but an empty name, whilst the Hebrew, born in servitude, has left his mark on the thought, the action, and the religion of the whole Gentile world, and made of the wretched tribes, whom he led forth out of bondage, a nation increasing daily in number and in strength, wealthy beyond all others, and rapidly spreading over the face of the earth. It would seem indeed as if the evils engendered by too great riches and prosperity were the sole danger seriously threatening the Jewish race. Already in bygone days it was against this rock that they more than once well-nigh suffered shipwreck; and had not the salutary school of adversity called them back from their foolish pride to saner counsels, humanity might have been

the poorer by the loss of these foremost champions of monotheism.

That loss indeed we could ill afford. We are only too apt to forget, that it is to this despised race that we owe one priceless treasure, the book of books, the Bible, in which scarce out of infancy we were taught to read, and which remains our chief comfort throughout life. In it the highest wisdom stands revealed in so noble a form, truth and poetry are blended together to such perfect harmony, the result is a masterpiece whose like no other literature in the whole world can match. Does not the finest work of all other great poets sink into insignificance beside the sublime utterances of the Hebrew prophets? In long dark dreary sleepless nights, I know not where such solace for weary souls may be found, as in the magnificent imagery, the impassioned language of Isaiah and Jeremiah. All the sorrow and suffering of the human heart since the beginning of Time seem to cry aloud with their voice, and it were vain to seek help in other books of devotion, whilst the words of these grandest spirits are there, to speak for us and bring us more than earthly consolation. Surely none has ever steeped his soul in these writings, and not risen from their perusal strengthened and refreshed. We might do without all other books, provided only this one, the source of life, the Revelation of God to man, were left us. For, together with the sublime poetry of the Psalms and the prophetic books, what wisdom and learning, rules of conduct for all seasons and under all circumstances, are stored up here!

The Jew, who follows the letter of the Law, need never be at a loss as to the right course to take; the pathway of duty is clearly marked for him, and under whatever vicissitudes of fortune he will have in his own Scriptures as sure a guide as was the Ark of the Covenant to the footsteps of his fathers. As to the historic books of the Old Testament, their simplicity and directness are a strong testimony in favour of the veracity of the writers; and I was much struck once by the suggestive remark of a Jew of high culture, who in discussion with a Christian, smilingly retorted: "All I can say is, that I wish for you that the history of your nation may one day be written with equal honesty, and that you may then be able to have it read out aloud for general edification in your churches, as we do ours!"

How comes it that by no other people has the attempt been made? Is it that we instinctively feel that in the Hebrew Scriptures the history of mankind has been told once and for all,—that for this, as for all other needs, the Bible may suffice? Otherwise, might not Christ Himself have wended His way to Persia, India or China, to bring to one or other of those nations the Gospel of peace and goodwill, framed in accordance with their own sacred books? The fact is certainly not without significance. For, maintain as we may that the men of greatest genius belong to no special age or country, that Dante, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Michelangelo and Goethe are the common property of mankind, it is all the same of no trivial import, that just this nation, and no other, should have been selected in

each case for the honour of bringing them forth. And where else, save among a people cast down from its former high estate, conquered, humiliated and oppressed, could the apotheosis of Suffering be so fitly preached, the message of Hope be brought to the poor and humble, and the erring be led back to the fold? Alas! that in a proud and vain-glorious spirit, expecting the promised Messiah in all the pomp of earthly power, they should have rejected the New Covenant of Mercy by which the uncompromising severity of the Mosaic dispensation was to be attenuated and made perfect!

I have wandered away somewhat from my theme. Perhaps however more in semblance than in reality, for as I pursue my own personal reflections, insensibly much is incorporated with them, which in the old days in the Vinea Domini was constantly being discussed, and may be said to have vaguely permeated the whole atmosphere. Judaism, as we then learned to know it, was presented less under an aspect of formality and exclusiveness, than as a leaven of righteousness, whereby the whole world should be regenerated. And possibly, could the other nations of the world have been brought to accept the Mosaic Code, much misery might have been spared them. For the great Lawgiver was wise in advance of his age, and many of the preventive measures, for instance, with which we now seek to ward off sickness from our flocks and herds, were foreseen and prescribed by Moses, long before Bacteriological Institutes were dreamt of! What profound knowledge too of human nature, what psychological in-

tuitions were his, who dared to let four generations of his weakened and demoralised followers perish, and merely serve as stepping-stones to the one destined to enter the Land of Promise and to settle down there in peace and plenty. What indomitable strength of purpose, what iron resolution must the man have possessed, who could wait thus calmly for results! Well might he feel that he had power to bid water flow from the barren rock, nay more, that in his righteous indignation he was justified in breaking the Tables of the Law, which he had just received, since it lay with him to inscribe them again. The light that flashed from his eyes was of more than mortal brilliancy, it was the sacred fire of enthusiasm, the glory that might illumine his face alone, who knew himself to be in direct communication with the Deity. And well and wisely has that kindred soul, Italy's greatest sculptor, portrayed him thus, with the aureole of genius and titanic strength encircling his brow. Across the centuries these two, mystically allied by their superhuman energies and achievements, have met and understood one another, and the real Moses stands forever revealed to us in the form and features lent him here. It is strength in its highest manifestation which Michelangelo has symbolised, and we feel ourselves in presence of something that transcends our puny human faculties,—that springs from Faith, unswerving and unshaken.

Whence comes it that such faith is no longer ours? The fault is our own. God has never yet forsaken the least of us. And surely if there be a

Creator of this marvellous universe, it behooves Him to watch over and uphold His creation. That much is sure. Every day brings with it a further proof of the insufficiency of so-called scientific explanations of the mystery of Being, every hour some highly praised and loudly welcomed discovery sinks into oblivion,—how many new theories of the universe, how many philosophic systems have I seen come and go, how many new prophets and teachers arise and pass away, in the course of the half-century I can look back upon! And if these apodictic truths are become naught, these theories discarded, these preachers turned into ridicule, well may I feel more and more disposed to cling to the simple child-like faith of my early years, and hold fast to this one sure anchor in a shifting world! Let the prophets of old serve as our example and guide. They were neither ignorant nor inexperienced, and their path was often beset by the Powers of Darkness, but their simple unquestioning faith brought them triumphantly through the greatest perils. Can we do better than imitate them? They are our spiritual fore-fathers, for our religion sprang forth out of Judaism,—we would deny it in vain.

Would that we resembled them more! Had we their faith, we should also have the same freedom from superstition that goes hand in hand with it, and which these heroes of the Old Testament have bequeathed to their natural heirs, to the representatives of the Jewish people among us now. It may be that it is a mere question of race, of constitutional temperament, but the fact none the less remains,

that the Jew possesses a positive aversion to every form of superstition—that outcome of weakness and helplessness, the last refuge of despairing souls. It is not in his nature to give way to despair; from that the dictates of his strong common-sense would in a measure guard him, but his absolute security comes from his trust in the God of Israel. The love of riches, and of the ease and luxury that riches bring, this, it cannot be too often said, the besetting sin of our age, is the one peril that menaces the Jewish race. Not only for their own sake, but for the services rendered to humanity, must we not pray that the curse be averted, and that they who proudly term themselves God's chosen people may avoid the gilded snare, and return to the simplicity and moderation of patriarchal times?

Someone—I have forgotten who it was—once called this earth *l'Ile du Diable,* and there are moments when it might seem almost to merit the name. And yet, quite so bad it surely need not be, if only each and all of us strive, in all single-mindedness and honesty of purpose, to make it something better—not by indulging in foolish vanities and useless luxuries—but, by the exercise of forbearance, gentleness and Christian charity, by the effort to bring light into dark places, and to brighten with some ray of joy the saddest lot. Were we but to act thus, Earth need be no Hell—it lies in our power to make it into a Paradise for ourselves and others. The Temple of Jerusalem will not be raised from its ruins in our days; there is no Zion on earth for the Children of Israel, for the Holy Places once laid

waste may not be restored by human hands until long years of expiation have gone by. That truth, Judah's best and noblest spirits are the first to acknowledge. Something of the ideas of one of them I have tried to recall in these pages, which I dedicate to his memory. They can give but a vague image of the picture in my mind, and the unavailing regret comes over me once more, that of the wisdom and learning once so near me, I have been able to preserve but so dim a recollection. I could envy the pupils of Bernays, the students who enjoyed the privilege of listening to his exposition of the Greek Testament, on which all the wealth of research, the critical insight of a true scholar were brought to bear. Deeper and further than most of us he surely saw!

CHAPTER V

TWO OLD RETAINERS

Faithful servants are no less important in a household than the members of the family itself. Are we not every moment beholden to them for our ease and comfort, so much in the routine of our daily lives depending on them, that we can never be grateful enough for the pains they are at to make its machinery run well and smoothly. In our family this was certainly the case, very many of the old servants I remember in my childhood being regarded by us as true and valued friends. Talking of this one day to one of my cousins, he exclaimed, "Ah, indeed! what would ever have become of us poor children, had it not been for the dear good old servants!"

It was still the fashion in those days, to bring children up with great severity, and for poor little princes and princesses in particular a Spartan system of education was enforced. Under these circumstances it was very often thanks to the servants that we escaped the Draconian penalties attached to every trifling misdeed; they were always ready to come to our aid in all our troubles, and by their adroitness and good-nature helped us out of many of our worst scrapes. There were two, in particular, who were our personal attendants, and can never be dissociated from our family history, accompanying us on all our travels, and literally sharing in all our joys and sorrows. The one was my father's valet,

Masset, a dear old fellow, with a round smiling face like a full moon, as good-natured as a big playful dog, always ready with some amusing story or harmless piece of fun, if he saw that one's spirits were low and that one wanted cheering. Lang, on the contrary, was a most dignified personage, tall, and speaking French beautifully, and with well-cut features and a certain stiffness of manner, which we felt to be rather imposing. But he was no less devoted to us, and I can recall many an instance of his zeal in rendering us service. To give one little example, one day, when in the Isle of Wight, my brother's kite, which he was flying, got caught in a tree; it was Lang who in a moment had climbed the tree, and set free the kite, almost before the little boy had time to distress himself about it. Lang told me about it afterwards, and of the bad fall he had in coming down from the tree, being really so badly shaken that he could not get up for a few minutes, though luckily no bones were broken. "And what did Wilhelm do?" I asked. "Oh! he ran off with his kite as fast as he could!" was the smiling reply. I very much fear that we were often extremely thoughtless in the way in which we took for granted that we should always find our wishes carried out by either of these two trusty allies, and that we did not always trouble ourselves to thank them afterwards. We have often laughed since to think of the artful devices of good old Masset, on one occasion, when my brother was shut up in his room for three weeks on a diet of dry bread and water, taking care to cut such very thick slices of bread, that

inside each both butter and meat could be concealed; and this he carried with the most innocent face in the world to the poor hungry little prisoner, whose sole diversion, meanwhile, consisted in dragging his table up to the attic window, so that by placing a chair on it he could succeed in climbing out on the roof, to shoot at the sparrows with his little cross-bow!

In our house the servants always said "we," in speaking of the family; they quite felt that they belonged to it, and they were indeed fully justified in feeling thus by their devotion to us all. We might well be fond of them, though we certainly did not go quite so far as my mother, who, as a very small child was so much attached to the funny little wizened old man-servant who was her special attendant, that she was heard to say: "Ce cher Rupp! ce cher Rupp! je voudrais tant l'embrasser! je l'aime beaucoup plus que Papa!" But we liked ours quite as well as all but our very nearest relations, perhaps rather better than some! Masset, as his name shows, was of French extraction, descended from Huguenot refugees. Another servant had one of those names with a Latin termination not infrequently to be found in the Rhineland; he was called Corcilius. Our great-uncle, the traveller, whose delight it was to give nicknames to every one, amused himself with twisting and turning the servants' names. Thus Lang (Long) became Kurz (Short), Schäfer (Shepherd) was transformed into Haas (Hare), and Corcilius was nicknamed "Garcilaso de la Vega." Many of these good people had been in

our service from father to son for several generations. One of our game-keepers belonged to a family who had been keepers with us for a couple of centuries. Many of our people lived to celebrate the jubilee of their fiftieth year in our service. Alas, not all!

But these two, as I said, Lang and Masset, were our special friends, we always felt so safe and sure with them, as if no danger could harm us. I should never stop, if I began relating everything, the fatherly way in which they took care of us, how often they carried us in their arms, all they did to please us, when we were quite small. For I was only two years old, when, the Rhine being frozen over for the first time for many years, they carried us across, my little brother and myself, in order that we might have a recollection of the unusual occurrence. And I do remember it quite distinctly, and many another little incident of like nature. I cannot think of these without emotion, but there was very much also that had its purely comic side. Whilst we were staying in Baden, later on, installed in the simplest, most modest fashion, with very few servants, some one happened one day to ring at the front door, just at the moment when Masset was summoned to my father. "Let me go," I said; "I will open the door!" But very firmly though gently, I was pushed on one side. "No, dear child,—that cannot be, that would never do!" I was eighteen at the time, but for both Lang and Masset I always remained a child.

One amusing little scene, though it has not to do with them, but with another old servant, I cannot

help relating here. In my mother's bedroom hung a lamp with a pink shade, giving a very agreeable light whenever it chose to burn, but more often than not a source of infinite trouble and annoyance. Now-a-days with the comfort and convenience of electricity or even of ordinary petroleum lamps, people can little imagine the nuisance of the old-fashioned oil-lamps. Two or three times in the course of an evening they had to be wound up with a sort of big key—and even then they would not burn! All the same everyone was agreed as to their being a most admirable invention! One evening when my poor little invalid brother was being put to bed, as he happened for once to be free from pain, my mother came away and joined us others at the tea-table. For she felt safe in leaving Otto to the care of his devoted attendant, a very old man, quite a relic of the past, as he had been in my grandmother's service and had been handed on to us. Suddenly the door opened, and a wrinkled old face, crowned with snow-white hair, peeped in.—"Your Highness, the lamp is going out!" My mother jumped up. To rush into the other room, pull down the lamp, and carry it outside before its feeble light was entirely extinguished and had poisoned the atmosphere with its fumes—all this was the work of an instant. But how we all laughed! till the tears ran down our cheeks. And we were laughing still when my mother came back to the tea-table, quite astonished at our merriment, and asking its cause. To her it had seemed just the most natural thing in the world that

the old servant should appeal to her, and that she should run to his assistance.

I should like to mention each and every one of those whose faithful service was so invaluable to our family during the years in which we were tried by sickness and suffering; many were admirable in their untiring devotion, but the two I have spoken of above and beyond all the rest. No words could do justice to the tact, the discretion, the unwearied patience, with which their duties were fulfilled. Never did they utter a word of complaint, on any of those long and fatiguing journeys, all the responsibility of whose arrangements fell on them, and which had to be performed under circumstances of exceptional difficulty, with my mother in her crippled condition, having to be carried in and out of train and boat, and my father and brother also helpless invalids. To say nothing of the amount of luggage that was required for the whole party, nurse and lady's maid, tutor, governess, and lady-in-waiting! And travelling was by no means so simple and easy a matter in those days. But Lang and Masset were equal to the circumstances, and managed it all without a hitch. For our journey from Bonn to Paris a whole railway-carriage had to be reserved, so that my mother, whose convulsive fits at that time followed one another in swift succession, barely giving her time between to recover consciousness, might rest undisturbed in the hammock put up for her. As for the preceding journey, that from Neuwied to Bonn, however difficult it may have been to plan, it was so successfully carried out, that to us children

it was all unalloyed enjoyment, like a page out of a fairy tale! As my mother could not stand the shaking of the steamer, one of the Rhenish coal-barges had been chartered, thoroughly cleaned and fitted out with mats and awnings, and the deck strewn with fresh flowers everywhere, and in order that the little journey should not take too long, the barge was taken in tow by one of the Rhine-steamers. It was all too delightful, so Wilhelm and I thought, this novel style of travelling, and everything so amusing—the little cabin with its sky-light, and above all the lovely little dancing waves in the wake of the steamer. We were quite lost in the enjoyment of the hour, and had but a faint understanding of the cares weighing on the elders of our party, though those were brought before us again, when we reached the landing-stage, and saw our mother carried unconscious ashore by Lang and Masset. As in spite of all their care and the excellent arrangements made, she had lain in convulsions the whole time, they might well feel somewhat discouraged at this first step in the pilgrimage undertaken in quest of health and solace for our invalids. But such grave thoughts cannot altogether quell the natural high spirits of youth, and I remember the peals of laughter that greeted us from my Uncle Nicholas, my mother's youngest brother, who was awaiting our arrival in the garden of the villa at Bonn, and who declared that he had known we were coming long before the boats were in sight, our approach having been heralded by the smell of ether and chloroform which surrounded us like an atmosphere as we glided along! That strong

smell of ether and all the other medicaments used—and used in vain—to still those fearful paroxysms of pain, this remains for me so indissolubly associated with certain scenes and memories of my childhood, that as my pen traces these words, the air I breathe is pervaded with them once more!

I suppose it was the spectacle of suffering constantly before my eyes, and of the utter inefficacy of the remedies prescribed, that gave me, already as a child, the conviction of the absolute helplessness of doctors in certain cases. Of course I know the immense strides medical science has made since those days, but after all I wonder if to us it would have brought much help! That which did, however, most undeniably contribute to our comfort, and often helped to procure the sufferers some moments' ease and rest, that was the quiet unobtrusive service of these two faithful souls. It was only natural that Masset's devotion to my father should outweigh all else; it literally knew no bounds, and a very few months after his master's death, his old servant was missing too. He had thrown himself into the Rhine, seeking a grave there between the blocks of ice with which the river was covered. His body was never found. It was only by the print of his footsteps in the snow (recognisable by the turning in of the toes), that some of the keepers traced him down to the riverside, and that we learned his fate. He simply could not live without the beloved master, to whom he belonged, body and soul. But the shock was a terrible one to us all; we mourned him most sincerely. Lang remained for years after my

father's death in my mother's service, and was with her when she came to see me in Roumania. To the end he was the same invaluable, trustworthy servant, with such sound judgment that my mother often asked his advice, always receiving excellent counsel from the clear-headed, much experienced old man.

I must not forget our old coachman, Lindner, who at my father's funeral drove the hearse, that none but himself might have the honour of performing that last service for his master. It was a touching sight, so uncontrollable was the grief of the fine old man, who, till then, had often been the life and soul of every rustic gathering. He it was who was generally the principal solo singer at every village festival. Unless, indeed, it so happened that I was there to take my part! There was always a sort of rivalry between us, as to which had the larger store of songs, Lindner or I! And at last, I believe, I bore away the palm; I knew even more than he did!

I am proud to think how sad all these good people were when I left my old home on my marriage. The day when I had to take my leave of the Ladies' Nursing Union, I said to Lang as I stepped into the carriage:—"Lang, je dois tenir un discours aujourd'hui." And struggling with his emotion, he replied: "Il doit être d'autant plus beau, qu'il ne sera jamais oublié!"

I was missed by all the good country-folk. They had always called me "our little princess!" And much nicer, prettier names still! The first time I came back on a visit after my marriage, through the

streets of Neuwied and in the villages round about, they ran shouting:—"Our Lisbeth is coming! Our Lisbeth is here again!"

With every workman and mechanic in the neighbourhood we had a personal acquaintance, it was as if quite peculiar ties of very long standing united them to us, for had not their fathers and grandfathers worked for ours, for centuries past? So that we felt interested in all that concerned them, and ourselves took great pride in the fact, that the town of Neuwied had given birth to the celebrated wood-carver, Rœntgen, specimens of whose beautiful artistic wood-mosaics found their way to all the capitals of Europe, and decorate castles and manor-houses in every land.

But it was the book-binder, Lesser, a Moravian, who was our special favourite, and every week we spent several hours learning his craft of him, till we were ourselves able to do some very pretty work. I have still books in my possession, which I bound myself, fifty years ago, and which are in perfectly good condition now. It would be a good thing if all children were taught something of the sort, to amuse them in their play-hours, instead of letting them run wild. There would be no constraint needed; it would be merely giving a sensible and useful outlet for those energies with which all children are naturally brimming over, and which, misdirected, too often lead them into mischief. We were always encouraged to look on at all events, whenever there were workmen in the house or grounds, and we watched them with the greatest in-

A Queen at Her Loom

terest, perhaps observing and learning more than was thought. And we often talked to them too, so that there was really nothing so very much to wonder at in those "Songs of the Crafts," which I was one day to write, nor in the intimate knowledge of each special kind of work which they revealed. Quite young we thus learned to use our hands, and they were never idle. I could give first-rate sewing lessons; here in Roumania even I have taught many a young girl to embroider. But it was the smith above all whom we were never tired of watching at his work. Everything pertaining to the forge has a special fascination for children—the bellows, and the tongs, and the sparks that fly, and the blackened faces—it is all too delightful! One should allow children to familiarise themselves with all these things, with the beauty and dignity of human toil in its every aspect, that they may learn to have the right feeling of respect both for the work itself, and for the workers.

Nor can one too early impress on the minds of children the debt of gratitude they owe to all those whose lives are passed in their service. The young can certainly not be expected to realise all the unselfishness—the utter forgetfulness and disregard of self, I should rather say,—which are implied in the term of "good and faithful servant." But they can be taught to show thoughtfulness and consideration towards all with whom they are brought into daily contact in these relations.

Servants of the type of those whom I have tried to describe here, are perhaps becoming more and

more rare. In any case, where we do come across them, we must look upon them as a gift from heaven, and it is in heaven, too, that they will have their reward. For no earthly master, however thoroughly he may recognise their merit, can ever hope to requite or repay such services as theirs. My little tribute of words is poor indeed to express the magnitude of such a debt. May they have found their reward in a better world, united to the master they served so faithfully on earth!

CHAPTER VI

FANNY LAVATER

This angel in human form was a grand-niece of the celebrated Swiss philosopher and physiognomist, Johann Caspar Levater. She was one of a family of ten children, the father a member of the little French-speaking Protestant community at Hanau, and the mother an Englishwoman.

When Fräulein Lavater came as governess to my mother the latter was just six years old, and she herself a mere girl of eighteen, with big brown eyes and black hair. She was, however, already remarkably well-read in the literature of several languages, and this she always declared she owed in a great measure to the circumstance that the nonsense called children's books did not exist in her childhood, she and her brothers and sisters being consequently obliged to have recourse for such amusement as they sought in reading, to the little collection of the best poets and prose-writers, of whose works their mother's library was composed. It was thus that she had read nearly all Shakespeare's plays when she was eight years old. In order to indulge their taste for reading, without always having to be guided by the choice of their elders, these young people had, she told us, discovered a most ingenious method of quietly pushing open a panel of the bookcase, making an aperture just wide enough to introduce the smallest arm among them, with which sev-

eral coveted volumes would be fetched down from the shelves, and carried off to some safe hiding-place, to be brought out and devoured at leisure afterwards.

It was not considered necessary in those days to pass a public examination in order to give a proof of one's knowledge and abilities, and in the person of our "Fräulchen," as she was affectionately called, we had a striking example of the high degree of intellectual culture that may be attained by careful and intelligent home training and a liberal course of general reading. It was in the latter respect, above all, that the superiority of independent study over the modern cramming system, was in this instance so abundantly proved. A very few minutes' conversation sufficed to show how much more solid information was possessed by the quiet little bookworm than by many a paragon of the latest methods of instruction, however much the latter might be advertised by the diploma conferred on her by the State. It would almost seem indeed as if no time were left for original thought or true mental culture in the schemes of our newest educational oracles, which apparently aim at reducing all mankind to one dull level of mediocrity, forcing all into the self-same groove, and trying to make one pattern serve for all of us, utterly regardless both of our aptitudes and our requirements. I fancy that before long there must come a reaction from this unlucky craze, and that women at any rate will once more content themselves with cultivating their mental powers to the utmost, feeling therein a higher satisfaction

than is to be derived from the noisier successes of a public examination.

The home in which Fräulein Lavater had grown up, in happy companionship of her brothers and sisters, under the guidance of their excellent mother, was a comfortable old-fashioned house in Hanau, surrounded by a pretty garden of considerable size. A genial and healthy spirit animated the whole household; the inhabitants of the little town prided themselves on the literary and artistic interests which they considered had been wafted over to them from Frankfort, the Frankfort of Goethe's days; they read much, and were fond of meeting together for philosophic discussion as well as for amateur acting. Those were still the good old honest simple times in which living was so cheap that an excellent mid-day meal, a slice of a roast joint with vegetables, bread and ale, could be had for three kreuzers, and in which young girls made their own simple white muslin ball-dresses, and embroidered them in coloured wools, wearing the same dress contentedly for a dozen dances; and assuredly they looked just as pretty and attractive in their modest attire as do the young women of the present day in the extravagant toilettes on which such preposterous sums are spent, often bringing ruin on a whole family. That so-called period of stagnation at which it is so easy to sneer, was in reality but the necessary reaction after the too great tension, the strain and stress of the War of Liberation, a rest after the storm, in which the nation might recuperate its energies, exhausted by the long conflict. No one talked then of

national antipathies or hereditary enmities; and religious strife was also unknown. It was, at all events, a peaceful happy existence which people led in Hanau, as in many another of the smaller German towns, in which little colonies of French Protestants, driven out of their own country by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, had settled down. There was something so distinctive about these worthy people, something that seemed to differentiate them from their compatriots of the Catholic Faith, and that has sometimes set me wondering as to what other possible turn affairs might have taken for France and for Europe in consequence, had Henry IV instead of hearing his first Mass thrown the whole weight of his influence into the other side of the scale, and brought his countrymen over to his religion! However that may be, it is certain that the presence of these foreigners gave Hanau something cosmopolitan, that the tone of thought and feeling which prevailed there was exceptionally liberal and enlightened. Anglophobia had not yet been invented in Germany, on the contrary, one admired and imitated everything English, looking up to the English nation as the most highly civilised of all.

Before Fanny Lavater's first day in Biebrich was over, her little pupil was already sitting on her knee, and telling her:—"Je vous aime déjà beaucoup!" "Vraiment?" said the young governess, somewhat surprised. "Je vous aime déjà beaucoup plus que ma sœur Thérèse!" "Oh!" and this time there was something not merely incredulous, but almost of protest in the tone. "C'est que je n'aime pas beau-

coup ma sœur Thérèse!" The elder sister had, after the mother's death, at once assumed the reins of government, and carried it on in so high-handed a manner, that she had by no means increased the affection in which she was held by her younger brothers and sisters.

The very next evening there was a big reception at the Castle, at which Fräulein Lavater, young and timid and unknown to everyone, had to appear. As she shyly entered the room, nobody made way for her, or took any notice of her at all, and my grandfather, observing this, strode through the room to the place where she stood, offered her his arm, and conducted her in this manner through the whole assembly, everyone falling back as they passed along. Needless to say, that her position in society was from that hour assured, and that she never required to assert herself in any way. And this little anecdote shows my grandfather, then a handsome dignified man in the prime of life, in the light in which he must have always appeared to the outside world; towards strangers he was affable, courteous and charming, reserving his ill-temper for his own family, his treatment of his children not allowing them to see in him aught but a pitiless tyrant.

For my mother a happy time now began, in which she and her dear governess lived quite by themselves in the rooms set apart for them in one wing of the castle, where they had their own little establishment—maid, footman and housemaids, all to themselves. Only once or twice a day did the children have to appear before their parents, kiss their hands

and be dismissed again at once. Pupil and governess were all in all to one another, and the former had already made up her mind that no circumstances which she could control, should ever separate them. Fräulein Lavater must come and live with her, the little girl explained, when she got married. "But if your husband does not want me?" "Alors, je dirai; mon homme, tu peux rester dans ta chambre, et moi je resterai dans la mienne!" My mother kept her word, insisting, to our unspeakable happiness, on Fräulein Lavater remaining with her for weeks, sometimes months together, throughout her married life, and afterwards, during her widowhood, altogether.

The saddest day in her whole childhood was that in which her dear governess was dismissed. The latter had often defended her little pupil when she saw her unjustly accused, as not infrequently occurred, her otherwise admirable and dearly-loved stepmother having the weakness—it was the only fault that could be laid to her charge—sometimes to try to shield her own children from their father's severity, at the expense of the others. And Fräulein Lavater's zealous efforts to exculpate the poor child, on an occasion when she knew her to be the victim of a most cruel injustice, simply led to her own dismissal. It was for both of them a cruel blow, and my mother has often told me how she wandered next day heartbroken through the empty desolate rooms, throwing herself at last on a sofa to cry her eyes out, with no one to care what had become of her.

My mother had hardly been able to speak a word of German at the time when Fräulein Lavater came to her. Nassau belonged to the Confederation of the Rhine and had decidedly French sympathies, so that everything was new to my mother, when she came to Neuwied, marrying into a family that had been mediatised for having drawn the sword for Germany. She was simply shocked at the brutality of one of my great-uncles, who related how he had ridden about on the field of Waterloo, in the hope of finding Napoleon and making an end of him. "That fellow Bonaparte! if I could but have got at him!" Uncle Max would say, clenching his fist; and my mother turned away in horror at such savage sentiments.

There had been, quite unknown to herself, another marriage planned for her, with the heir to the throne of Russia, whose father, the Emperor Nicholas, was a great friend of my grandfather. But the match, on which both fathers were so bent, fell through after my grandfather's death, the Emperor's expressed desire merely having the effect of driving his son into opposition to his wishes. But my mother was ignorant of all this; all she knew of or cared for in Russia was the family of the Grand-Duchess Hélène, her own first cousin and sister to her stepmother. To her, the Grand-Duchess, and her daughters, she was deeply attached.

I cannot insist enough on the benefit resulting for us all from the presence of Fräulein Lavater in our midst. She came among us as a true angel of peace, bringing harmony into the strange mass of hetero-

geneous elements—sometimes most conflicting and discordant—of which our household was composed. Never were we so happy, either as children or a little later on, as when sitting with her, close up beside her chair, listening to all she had to tell us. Her memory was so excellent and had been so assiduously cultivated, that her mind was a perfect treasure-house of all that is best and noblest in the literature of the world. She was never idle; her fingers always occupied with some pretty piece of needlework whilst she talked, and when alone, they worked on indefatigably, her eyes meanwhile fixed on the book that lay open before her. It was owing to this praiseworthy habit, that in the course of completing some beautiful piece of lace or embroidery, that looked as if wrought by fairy fingers, she had at the same time committed whole pages of her favourite authors to memory, and would therefore not only relate to us the substance of her reading, but even recite long passages of poetry or prose by the hour together, in her soft agreeable voice, and with most admirable elocution. Her needlework was truly artistic; much of it would have been worthy to find a place in a museum. Her tapestry-work was as if painted, and an artist friend of ours once said of her groups and landscapes, that whilst the paintings done by some young ladies of his acquaintance looked as if worked in cross-stitch, Fräulein Fanny's needlework was so fine that it might have been painted! "Look at that grey horse," he went on, pointing to a little group, "so

delicately is it shaded, that Wouwerman might have acknowledged it as the product of his brush!"

Her own harmonious and well balanced disposition enabled our dear "Fräulchen" to play the part of peace-maker among stormier natures, and her influence was ever used for good. Never in thirty years of the closest intimacy did I hear a single word fall from her lips, by which I could possibly have felt hurt; and I was as ultra-sensitive and liable to take offence, as are most children, who are too harshly brought up. With others I was always looking out for blame,—a scolding seemed the natural thing to expect,—never with her! She could find fault, too, when it was needful, but with so much tact and kindness, and accompanying her criticism with reflections that took away all its bitterness and made it sound almost like indirect praise; and then when I looked up at her, half in alarm, with her soft little hand she would stroke mine and say smiling:—"There was the horrid little serpent concealed beneath the roses, was it not?" She was for ever pouring oil on the troubled waters, making life better and happier for everyone, and most of all for us poor children, who had in many respects a very hard time, in an atmosphere so little conducive to our healthy and happy development. We were accustomed to say among ourselves that we were a three-leaved shamrock of ill-luck, our initials —(of all our names, Otto, Wilhelm, and Elizabeth),— forming together the sound Oweh, or Woe!

Poor little woful shamrock in truth it was! We often stood in need of someone to protect us, our

parents' ill-health placing us so entirely in the hands of our first governesses and nursery-governesses, who unfortunately happened to be anything but fitted for a position of such trust. We should have suffered still more from their harsh treatment and rough ways, had not Fräulein Lavater constantly stepped in, to interpose calmly and gently on our behalf. My gratitude towards her knew no bounds, and can find but scant expression in the words I write, which seem cold and colourless beside the feelings that dictate them. She alone understood the restless workings of my imagination, its insatiable thirst of beauty, not to be stilled by the daily portion of dull dry fact, which was alone provided by our earliest instruction, she alone cared to satisfy the intense longing for poetry, for literature, for some other knowledge than was contained in the little scholastic manuals of science and history on which our young minds were almost exclusively fed. Thanks to her, when I was eight years old, I was liberated from the very disagreeable young governess who had tyrannised over me since my fourth year, and a friend of her own substituted, an amiable and highly-instructed woman, with whom I at once made great progress, my studies becoming from that moment a real delight to me. Grammar, and French grammar above all, was a real passion with me, and unconsciously I was already then, in my love of languages and of language itself, cultivating and preparing the instrument that was one day to be my own, to be played on as others play on the strings of a harp or violin. But clever and accom-

plished as Fräulein Josse was, and much as I enjoyed my lessons with her, the hours spent with Fräulein Lavater were worth even more, for her knowledge had a still wider range, her judgment was more calm and clear, being utterly unbiased by any personal considerations. She possessed a special gift for calming the tumult—a tumult of thought unsuspected by everyone else—which my lively imagination sometimes set up in my brain. As she was the only person who could sympathise with my flights of fancy, perhaps the only one who did not consider absolutely culpable and reprehensible the tendency to indulge in them, it was only natural that she should be the sole confidante of my dreams and aspirations. With her too I could give vent to my natural liveliness, to the perpetual flow of high spirits, so sadly out of place in the atmosphere of the sick-room. My youthful health and strength drew down on me all sorts of uncomplimentary epithets from some of the elder members of the family, to whom, more even than to the invalids, my liveliness must have been a trial; Whirlwind, Flibbertigibbet, Will-o'-the-wisp, these were a few of the names showered on me by Uncle Max, and more or less acquiesced in by the rest. It must have been the sensation of exuberant, irrepressible vitality within me which made me one day exclaim—"Mamma, I feel as if I could carry away a mountain!" Alas! I have sometimes thought since that my heedless words must have been overheard by Fate!

When I came back from St. Petersburg everything

was changed, my dear father dead, and quite a different way of living to be entered on by my mother and myself, she being restricted henceforth to her dower for her own use, the estates of course passing into my brother's hands, and simply being administered by her until his coming of age. We could now no longer keep open house as in the old days, in which the carriage had scarcely departed that took away one party of guests, when already and perhaps quite unexpectedly another would appear round the corner bringing a fresh relay. It was a quiet and rather lonely life that began thus suddenly for us three women, but no less full of interest, thanks to the one of us, to our dear Fräulein Lavater! We were hardly an hour of the day apart from one another, she and I; when the weather made it impossible for us to go out, if the wind was raging or the snow falling fast, then we contented ourselves with walking up and down indoors, pacing the rooms sometimes for hours, subjects of conversation never failing, her well-stored mind always ready to provide some fresh topic, and her marvellous swiftness of intuition enabling her to place herself at another's point of view, and participate in phases of thought and feeling quite new to her. I had but just returned home after a lengthy absence, in which I had travelled much, seen many new countries, and met numbers of celebrated and interesting people. She meanwhile had remained quietly at home, surrounded daily by the same scenes, the same faces. And yet, how infinitely richer and fuller she had contrived to make

her life, that inner life, which is in truth independent of and superior to all influences from without!

I could wish that many another young girl might go through the experience that then was mine, that she might enjoy and profit by days like our winter-days in Monrepos, provided, of course, that she had such a companion as Fräulein Lavater to share in them. And better still were the long winter evenings, when we sat round the lamp, the immense deep stillness of the mighty woods reigning outside and a like feeling of calm, of aloofness from the world dwelling within our souls. Of inestimable value was that time for me, after all the bustle and fatigue of the long journeys, of the rapid succession of events, of all the changing, shifting phantasmagoria of the busy, restless world, stamped in almost bewildering variety on my brain. The impressions had been so vivid, so multitudinous, they bade fair to grow confused or distorted, crowding on and threatening to efface each other. But now, in this quiet uneventful existence, I could look through the rich collection I had brought home with me, could examine each treasure undisturbed, and range them all in order, could bring myself into harmony with all I had so recently acquired. How quickly those evenings passed! Our fingers were busy all the time; my mother spinning, and I already making all sorts of new inventions in tatting,—that pretty work of which I have always been so fond, and which I have gone on elaborating of late years into something resembling old-fashioned ecclesiastical embroideries. We talked at intervals, or else read

aloud by turns,—from some author whose high and noble thoughts we might meditate on for long after.

It was the sensation of being enfolded and shut off from the rest of the world by the woods around us, that lent those evenings their peculiar charm. Often during the day I had wandered for hours through my beloved woods, with the sole companionship of the faithful St. Bernard dogs, my trusty guardians. We did not keep to the beaten path, but plunged into the deepest thickets, threading our way through the most tangled growth of brushwood. And on my return, my first care was to note down the songs which the trees had whispered in my ear as I passed beneath them. I was the wild rose, the wood rose, for all my friends. They had christened me thus, because of the roses on my cheeks, which I never lost, although so much of my youth had been spent in the atmosphere of the sick-room. I might indeed pass as a living contradiction to every sort of theory of infection, my magnificent health would have given the lie to all stories of germs and microbes,—I was really never ill in my life, and never had occasion to see a doctor, until the attack of typhoid fever I had while in St. Petersburg. That was perhaps in a great measure the result of the long anxiety, the sadness of years, but it did not come on till afterwards, not in the least as an immediate consequence of the unhealthy atmosphere in which I had grown up.

The drawback to the life we were now leading, lay of course in its natural tendency to encourage mere dreaming, almost at the expense perhaps of

one's active duties, of all practical work. For me this might have been a special danger, had I not been preserved from it by the good sense, the clearsightedness, the spirit of self-sacrifice of my Mentor. Of herself she never thought at all. Therein lay the secret of her great power, of her unbounded influence. On her deathbed she could say:—"How good it is, when one's whole life has been filled by one great affection!"

For those who knew her best, her whole existence was summed up in those words. But did they also contain a hidden meaning, the key to a secret none had ever guessed, some page of quite unsuspected romance, an attachment which death or circumstances had cut short? I had sometimes wondered that she alone of all her sisters had remained unmarried, had therefore never known the happiness of having a home, a family of her own; but, like everyone else, I had grown accustomed to the idea that her devotion to my mother was so all-absorbing as to leave no room for any other affection in her heart. Most probably was it so, and that her last words did but refer to the friendship, the affection, to which she had devoted her whole life, identifying herself so entirely with the feelings, the hopes, the interests and aims of the family of which in the truest sense she had become a member, that she found within that circle ample scope for the exercise of all her energy, the satisfaction of all her wishes, nor ever for one moment regretted having formed no other ties. She died in the year 1877, after the Balkan war, that war on which hung the

destinies of Roumania, and out of which the country came forth victorious and independent, and before her death she had come to pay me a visit there, appearing in her old character of an angel of peace and consolation. For it was in the saddest, darkest hour of my whole existence, that in which its whole joy and happiness, granted to me for so short a time, had been torn from me forever, and when my only wish was to be allowed myself to die also. In that moment of utter hopelessness, none knew as did this old friend of mine, in what manner alone to strive to reconcile me with life. Hers were the gentle words, the gentle touch, that can never hurt, that one can bear, even when one's whole heart seems to be an open wound. "Bun de pus pe rana," —"good enough to be put on a wound," is a Roumanian proverb, that always recurs to me, in thinking of Fräulein Lavater, for it exactly describes the feeling one had when with her. Her hands were soft as satin, and in the moral or spiritual sphere, she had just the same exquisite softness of touch. Whilst others, even with the very best intentions, seemed only too often to bear heavily on a spot too sensitive to be breathed upon, every word and action of hers was like balm to the soul. Instead of making the vain attempt to offer consolation for a sorrow beyond redress, she understood at once that in such utter bereavement one can only be reconciled to the world by the effort to live for others. And that lesson she was best fitted to teach, who had for so many years practised it in her own person, putting herself so entirely on one side, and only think-

ing how she could help and comfort those around her. One felt sure of never being misunderstood or misjudged by her, since her readiness of sympathy enabled her at all times to put herself in another's place, and look at the situation from another point of view. Witty and amusing in conversation, her modesty made her draw back more and more from general society as she grew older, under the plea that old people are always dull, but this did not prevent a proper sense of her own dignity, of that which was due to herself. She once said to me with a smile, in relating an incident from which it appeared that she had scarce been treated with due consideration—"Well, if the place allotted me at table did me no honour, I must suppose that I did honour to the place by accepting it!" Impartial and dispassionate in her judgment of men and events, she was equally unbiased in her literary criticisms, paying absolutely no heed to the voice of public opinion in such matters, but thinking and judging for herself. No one I have known ever possessed in the same degree the gift of rapid and unerring discernment: she would glance through a volume, and in a moment her mind was made up as to its contents; she seemed able to take in, and digest and assimilate them, in less time than it would take most people to read the headings of the chapters. It was a real pleasure to see her, when a big parcel of books arrived from a library; sometimes a peep into the uncut pages of a volume sufficed for it to be put on one side to be returned as not worthy of further attention, whilst over others she hovered,

paper-knife in hand, glancing now here, now there, and choosing the best for more serious perusal, like a bee, we used to tell her, that darts from one plant to the other, sipping honey from the choicest blossoms!

Like the bees too, who are not content each to gather honey for itself alone, but bring it all to the common store, the treasures culled by Fräulein Lavater from her reading were not intended solely for her own pleasure and profit, but were ever destined to more unselfish purposes. She could enliven the dullest society, revive the most languishing conversation with some apposite remark, some reference to a topic so well chosen that even the most listless felt their interest aroused. And best of all, her soft low voice was like a charm for mental fatigue or overstrung nerves. It was as if she could wile away headache or worry with her gentle tones, she brought comfort to every sick-bed, and in the long weary day of convalescence, when the work of taking up again the burden of existence is perchance almost too great an effort for the weakened frame, who was there could ever, like Fräulchen, cheer and rouse one from one's apathy, who else possessed such an inexhaustible fund of delightful stories, or could relate them as she did? How often, in later days, in the long slow recovery from illness, have I not sighed for her presence, feeling that she could beguile my pain and weariness with one of the stories or legends she told so well. She it was who first encouraged in me the taste for literature, the love of poetry, in which others saw only a weakness

and a danger. It was her guiding hand that directed my youthful talent into the right path, treating it as a plant worthy of cultivation, and not as a dangerous or perhaps even poisonous weed, to be rooted up or trodden under foot! For it was to many quite a shocking idea, that a princess should not merely have the misfortune to be born a poet, but that she should actually take no pains to conceal so terrible a fact! That sort of talent really could not be considered suitable to one's station, and where there was no possibility of extirpating, it must at least be hidden away out of sight! But Fräulein Lavater, in her quiet unobtrusive way, saying no word to hurt prevailing prejudices and thereby expose me to still greater disapprobation, found the means of lending just the aid and sheltering care so requisite to my first timid attempts at giving poetic form to the emotional and intellectual chaos over which I brooded. The sure and refined taste of the elder woman rendered invaluable service to the somewhat headlong and indiscriminating enthusiasm of youth, in pointing out to me, at the same time with the best models for admiration and imitation, errors to be avoided, excesses and weaknesses to be condemned. Then, as later, it was the certainty that one's efforts and aspirations, one's failures and mistakes would meet in her, not merely with justice, but with that indulgence which is perhaps the highest form of human justice, this it was which inspired one with confidence in seeking her verdict, and spared one the excessive discouragement some criticisms invariably leave behind.

A sense of justice is very strong in most children, and they suffer more acutely than is generally supposed, in the consciousness of being unjustly treated. Misjudged as in my childhood I felt myself to be by the iron disciplinarians whose aim it was to crush out all originality, it was a comfort to know that to one person I never appeared wilful or headstrong, and it was perhaps scarce possible to experience a greater satisfaction than was mine in later years, in hearing Fräulchen's affectionate tribute to "our sunbeam," as she was fond of calling me:—"She was always a dear good child, only wishing to make everyone happy!"

To this very day, in those moments of disappointment and lassitude by which all of us are at times beset, I have but to think of Fräulein Lavater, for the old feeling of peace and calm to come over me, and the physical pain is at once stilled, and the cares and troubles that seemed overpowering shrink into insignificance. More than once, in times gone by, when the burden laid upon my shoulders seemed greater than I could bear, her adroit touch adjusted it and turned it into a feather-weight, and recalling this, I rouse myself again to the struggle, to find as before my strength and courage increase, in proportion to the difficulties of the situation. I was in good truth Fräulchen's pupil, her spiritual child, and it was as much for her as for myself that I was indignant, when of recent years an absurd report came to my knowledge, of a nervous complaint from which I was said to be suffering! As soon might one have credited *her,* the best-balanced person in

the world, with an hysterical or nervous attack, since, like herself, I have always had my nerves under perfect control, and sharing in her somewhat contemptuous feeling for neurasthenia, neurosis, or any other such new-fangled disorder, I should consider it something degrading, of which to be ashamed, to be justly ranged among its victims. I have given, I think, sufficient proof to the contrary, and have shown of what well-tempered steel my nerves are made, by continuing my work uninterruptedly during long years of ill-health, and in spite of severe and almost unremitting pain, of which the doctors only much later discovered the cause. Well may I claim to disdain nerves and all who suffer from them, considering that they only too often serve as a mask, behind which selfishness and hypocrisy are hidden. Fräulein Lavater, at any rate, did not plead nerves if ever her equanimity were disturbed; she would own quite candidly:—"I am so irritable to-day!"

In one of the little albums—"Books of Confessions," as they were called,—that at one time had so much vogue, among a host of silly questions, this one was asked: "Of all human qualities which do you prize most highly?" Without a moment's hesitation, my father wrote down: "Enlightened goodness of heart!" No better description could be given of our Fräulein. Hers was the kindness, the goodness of heart, that may be truly said to be "illuminated" by the understanding; not that mere unthinking, easy good nature, blind in perception and indiscriminate in action, but the sympathy that

springs from deepest insight, the indulgence that is born of comprehension—in a word, the charity that "beareth and endureth all things." In each family circle, ever a little world in itself, with its sometimes incongruous elements and oft divergent and conflicting interests, and wherein the little rift may so soon be widened to an irreparable breach, the trifling dissension develop into implacable enmity, the presence of one person endowed with this rarest of human attributes will ever be the harmonising medium, the spirit of conciliation, the factor indispensable to the cohesion of the group.

Would that there were more like Fräulchen in this weary world! Fate is hard enough towards most of us. No need that we should ever strive to place a stumbling-block in another's path, or make it darker by one shadow the more. Let us at least cherish the memory of all, whose "irradiating kindliness" for a moment brightened the gloom.

Wherever great intelligence and true culture combine, as in the person of Fanny Lavater, with moral strength and sweetness to the formation of a character, the result is like the harmonious blending of rich hues in some beautiful old cathedral window, through which the daylight streaming, transforms into new and unwonted loveliness even the commonest objects on which it falls!

CHAPTER VII

BUNSEN

It was at the time when this learned and accomplished friend of the highly gifted King Frederick William IV. was the representative of Prussia at the Court of St. James, that I first visited England in my childhood. We came over twice, on the first occasion to stay in the Isle of Wight, whilst our second visit was divided between Hastings and London. A sincere and lasting friendship then sprang up between my family and that of this remarkable man, continuing to this day among the members of a younger generation.

Bunsen loved to be the Mecænas of men of talent, and many were the interesting people whom we met at his house. The whole family was musical; two of the sons, just then students at the University of Bonn, sang most delightfully; "Kathleen Mavourneen" was first made known to me by the pleasing tenor of the one, and the other gave the famous "Figaro quà, Figaro là," of the "Barber of Seville," with great effect in his agreeable baritone. I had the pleasure of hearing the organ in Westminster Abbey played by the eldest daughter, whose professor, the celebrated organist, Neukomm, became from that moment a most welcome guest in our house, sometimes staying with us for weeks at a time. It was from this fine old musician that in my twelfth year I began learning the harmonium, and became

moreover an enthusiast like himself for the sweet plaintive tones of the Æolian harp. It was his delight to fix one of these simple instruments in the crack of an open door, and seat himself in the full draught, to listen for and note down the weird melodies played by the wind. Often on a lovely summer's evening,—in the moonlight of Monrepos that has been sung of among us from generation to generation,—we would have the harmonium brought out on the terrace, and letting his fingers stray over the keys, Neukomm would imitate the sighing of the breeze in the strings of the harp, catching up the echo of some murmuring sound, and repeating and improvising on it for hours.

Our stay in the Isle of Wight was delightful, and I look back on the pretty little island as a sort of earthly paradise, fit scene for a happy, idyllic life. Our little villa was smothered in the clustering roses that climbed over it everywhere, and on all sides stretched a lawn of beautiful soft green grass, perfectly kept, but upon which we children could fling ourselves and play to our hearts' content; such a relief after the perpetual injunctions to refrain from stepping on the grass, to which we were accustomed in Germany. Then we had the good luck too, to be by the sea during a spring-tide, a novel experience, that gave us a most glorious excitement, as we happened to be taking our daily sea-bath, and there was the very greatest difficulty in getting the bathing-machine safely back to the beach again. The ropes with which the poor horse was harnessed gave way, and the man, who was pale with fright, had hard

work to rescue the little house-on-wheels with its occupants, whilst my brother and I were simply delighted to see the waves dash over it, rejoicing at last to encounter something that was like a real adventure!

Our second visit to England was in the year 1851, and we were in London just at the closing of the first great International Exhibition, at which I remember seeing immense crowds of people standing bare-headed and cheering, as "God save the Queen!" was played. That spectacle made more impression on me than anything in the Exhibition itself, unless it was perhaps the splendid trees, one giant oak-tree in particular, which had been built in with the edifice, completely roofed over by the big glass dome. Other contemporary events I did not witness myself, but only heard of them from our friends,—the funeral of the Duke of Wellington, for instance,—which they described to us passing their house, the Embassy in Carlton Terrace, in an endless procession rolling on for hours, like wave on wave in swift succession, to the mournful strains of the Dead March from the Eroica Symphony. As the sounds of one military band died away in the distance, the next one had already come up in step to the melancholy cadence of the selfsame march. Just like the rising and sinking of ocean waves was the impressive yet monotonous grandeur of the nation's tribute to its great soldier.

The Prussian Embassy was at that time frequented by almost every one of talent or high intellectual culture to be found in London, Bunsen pos-

sessing in a remarkable degree the gift of attracting clever people to himself. He was quick too to discern the promise of future eminence in others, and many might relate how in that genial atmosphere their talent was discovered and encouraged and obtained its first recognition. Mendelssohn and Max Müller were amongst those who quite young there found themselves at once prized at their true value. The conversational powers of the master of the house himself, the young people so gifted and versatile, the open hospitality, the excellent music,—all these things were so many magnets, that drew strangers within the charmed sphere. I was of course not capable then of appreciating the depth of Bunsen's learning or his intellectual worth, but his marvellous command of language and rhetorical facility impressed me greatly. In the fluency of his speech, the ease and elegance with which on all occasions he expressed himself, he resembled his royal friend, Frederick William IV. And his handsome face recalled that of the great Goethe at an advanced age, the likeness being especially striking on his deathbed.

But it was only natural that at that time Bunsen's children and grandchildren should interest me much more than he did himself. The lame daughter, above all, like my mother at that time, being always wheeled about in her chair and unable to walk a step, and in whose features I also discovered something of a likeness to my mother, that perhaps lay in the kind gentle smile. The sympathy they felt for one another was naturally strengthened by their

common misfortune, in each case the lameness appearing to be absolutely incurable. During the summer we spent in the Isle of Wight, my mother could still go about on crutches, then after the birth of my younger brother her condition grew far worse, complete atrophy of the one leg having apparently set in, and the pain hardly allowing her any sleep at night. Fräulein von Bunsen's lameness proceeded from an attack of coxalgia as an infant, and since her sixth year all hope had been abandoned of her ever being able to walk. We children were meantime quite at home in the house of one of her brothers, playing with his children, with whom we continued on affectionate terms our whole life long. It is a satisfaction to be able to look back on fifty years of uninterrupted friendship such as this. Very specially did it exist between myself and Bunsen's daughter-in-law, Elizabeth, so dear to me, that it was almost as if ties of blood had united us. Only quite recently did I bid a last farewell to this sweet and lovable woman, death having called her away. But she lives on in my remembrance, and I have an agreeable recollection also of her father, the Quaker, Gurney, and of his greeting, warm and courteous in spite of his keeping his hat on his head, as he met us on the threshold of his house with the words—"Be welcome to my home!"

I observed and learned a great deal more than anyone at that time suspected! It was my first stay in a great city, and the first lesson it brought home to me was that of complete acquiescence in my own limitations, or rather in those imposed on me by

circumstances, my very modest supply of pocket-money making quite unattainable all the splendours I saw exhibited in the shop windows. There was one lovely doll-shop, with the most exquisite dolls, as big as real babies, and directly I had a small sum to spend, I made my way thither, quite happy to have a close view of all these treasures, even if I should be unable to purchase any of them. And in truth, it was just the tiniest wax-doll of all that the contents of my small purse could buy—but such a lovely one, in a dear little tiny bed with curtains of rose-coloured silk, through which the rosy light streamed over the delicate little wax face. How I loved that doll! It looked just like a little princess in a fairy tale, or a fairy itself, sleeping there in the beautiful rose-coloured light. None of the bigger, grander dolls could have appealed to my imagination as did this little one. After all it is on *that*—on the part played by their own imagination, that chiefly depends the amount of pleasure children get out of their toys, and those that are in proportion to their own diminutive scale and on a level with their simple requirements, appeal to them far more than others, chiefly remarkable for their magnitude and costliness. Lively as I was, I took the very greatest care of all my toys, treating them as if they were animate, sentient objects, so that I was in despair if any of them got broken or hurt. Demonstrations of affection never being encouraged, in fact being rather sternly repressed in our family, all my pent up tenderness poured itself out on my dolls and also on my little horse-hair pillow which I used

to hug and kiss in gratitude every night before going to sleep. It was all the dearer to me, because it was not taken with us on our journeys, and as I was not allowed to sleep on a down pillow, I generally, when we were away from home, had to do without altogether, which was by no means pleasant. Notwithstanding—or perhaps in consequence of this severe training,—having always been accustomed in my youth to sleep on a rather hard thin mattress stretched on a very narrow camp bedstead, I have grown somewhat more luxurious in that respect in my later years, and can hardly now be too softly pillowed in order to rest at ease. It is as if there were a sort of reaction,—a revolt of human nature against unnecessary and useless hardships imposed, —a lassitude of the whole frame to which some slight measure of indulgence must be accorded. Not in the matter of the palate though! Naturally abstemious, the habits of my youth still prevail with me there to such an extent, that to this day I prefer a slice of good wholesome black bread to all the daintiest, most skilfully prepared dishes in the world! We children knew too by experience the relish that the imagination may impart to the simplest fare, unconsciously resembling one of the creations of the great English novelist as we "made believe" to spread a little butter on the bread which the hygienic theories of the age insisted on our eating dry! But everything has its compensation, and who knows if those pleasures of the imagination, which were our chief resource, are not denied to the younger generation, from whom we scarcely seem to exact even

needful self-restraint and self-denial, much less to call upon them for any exceptional sacrifice of their own comfort. Where every whim is gratified from the outset, there remains neither the necessity nor the inclination to seek refuge from unpleasant realities in a fairer world, to spread one's wings and take flight for the realms of Fancy. Do the children of the present day even rightly believe in the possibility of thus spreading their wings? Would not some of these little sceptics laugh at the idea? Poor little things! Can it really be that there is no fairyland for them, no enchanted isles in the distant ocean, no kingdoms to conquer, no heroic deeds to be performed, that their souls find complete satisfaction in the prosaic details of everyday life, and never soar beyond the region of dull commonplace fact of their dreary school-hours? They little know of what they are deprived! They could never guess the joy we knew in the possession of this wondrous secret, this magic key, which unlocked the gates of fairyland, of the world of dreams, of noble adventure, wherein we could wander at will. What battles we fought, what gallant deeds we performed, what wrongs we redressed with the aid of those invisible armies, always at hand to come to our assistance and conduct us to victory, when the odds seemed too overpowering! But we had not invariably such exalted ambitions as these, it was not even always the discovery of some lonely desert island on which we were bent, but a much simpler, more modest lot satisfied us, provided it were but sufficiently removed from that which in truth was ours! Thus it was one

of my favourite ideas from the time I was four years old, to be a village schoolmistress, but I could not persuade my brother to promïse that he would settle down beside me as the schoolmaster. That would have clashed with his dream of being a soldier, so it was settled that I should be the "daughter of the regiment," the *vivandiére,* and accompany it everywhere so that we might not be separated. Ah! what marvellous adventures, what hairbreadth escapes, what glorious triumphs were ours! Sometimes we were sold as slaves, at others we were bold sea-farers and again quiet peasant-folk carrying our spades and milk-cans. It was by this means that we kept up our spirits, and preserved our good humour successfully, in spite of all that was irksome in our actual surroundings. Thanks to my lively imagination, I did not succumb to the persistent onslaught of the educational efforts destined to turn the current of my thoughts into a perfectly alien channel. In vain was I tied down to science and mathematics, logarithms and equations will forever be to me lifeless, meaningless abstractions, and it took me much less time than I had spent in acquiring it, to forget the velocity of a body falling through space! As for doing a simple sum in addition, I might as well never have learned the process at all for the little I know about it now. But the art of inventing a story, of calling up imaginary beings, of following them through the vicissitudes of their career, and weaving all this together to a plot—that was mine then and is still mine, notwithstanding all that was done to crush it out of me. What should

I have done on the long tedious journeys, had I not been able to amuse myself by the delightful stories I thought out. Sitting cramped in my corner of the travelling-carriage or railway compartment, afraid even to stretch my limbs lest the movement should disturb one or other of the invalids, I owe it to my imagination alone, that child as I was, I did not fall into hopeless melancholy.

It was this same happy faculty of creating for myself an ideal atmosphere, and peopling this new world with my best-beloved heroes, and the no less heroic creations of my own brain,—this it was which lent so great a charm to many of our resorts,—standing us in good stead for instance, in investing with beauty the rather tame, stiff garden of a London square, so unsuited for the abode of mystery or romance. Apart from our intimacy with the Bunsen family, our stay in London possessed indeed few attractions for us. There was no relaxation of the customary strictness with which we were treated, on the contrary, there seemed to be an accumulation of wearisome restrictions and petty annoyances attendant on the stay in strange houses. Even when there was a garden, we might hardly play there, certainly not dig in it, nor run across the lawn, and as for venturing to gather a flower, I was haunted by visions of angry men pursuing us with thick sticks, ever since the day when the landlord had shaken his finger at us, just for touching his orange-trees! It was a little better in Hastings, where we had the beautiful open sea, and the beach on which we could play undisturbed. But our pleas-

ure there was damped by our perpetual anxiety and sadness on my mother's behalf, whose illness had already entered then on its most distressing stage. From the window I could see her carried in and out of the sea, sometimes alas! to lie in convulsions on the beach, the servants standing round holding up umbrellas to protect her from the gaze of inquisitive onlookers. I stood sad and helpless at the window, unable to understand the unfeeling curiosity of these strangers. It was not quite so bad on their part though, as the behaviour of two Germans on the steamer that brought us over from Ostend, who kept pushing against my mother's lame foot as she sat on deck, and even complained at her, for taking up so much room. It hurt her most of all, that it should be her own countrymen who were thus rude and heartless. Let us hope that it was merely sea-sickness which made them so inhuman! And the lady resembled them who, when my mother had dragged herself on her crutches to a railway-carriage and was preparing to enter it, shut the door in her face, saying:—"there is no room here!" What a contrast to the good old bathing-man at Hastings, who used to carry her in and out of the water, and was so sorry to see how she suffered, that he would pat her cheek gently, and talk to her as if he were comforting a small child:—"There, there, poor dear! it will be better soon!"

That journey from Ostend belongs to the most painful experiences of my childhood, it was nothing but discomfort and sadness, and I shall never forget the wailing of my poor little baby brother Otto, suf-

fering all night long in one of the frightful paroxysms of pain, for which in vain relief was sought. His devoted English nurse, our good Barnes, sat rocking him in her arms the whole time, and every now and then she cast a sympathetic glance my way, but she could do nothing to help or comfort me, she was entirely taken up with her poor little charge. Had there been anyone there who could have told me a story to distract my thoughts, to take me for a moment out of myself, and away from the unhappiness which I was helpless to console! How often may not some pretty well-told tale, some little snatch of song, help a child to forget the misery of its weary limbs and aching head, and soothe it to sleep.

One of my best and happiest experiences belongs however here, and must not be forgotten. It relates to that very Fräulein von Bunsen, the lame daughter, Emilie, "Aunt Mim," as we afterwards called her, of whom I have already spoken. And the incident was called forth by some childish misdeed of mine, one of those trivial offences many would deem scarce worth noticing, but for which with us a punishment utterly disproportionate to the enormity of the crime was invariably inflicted. I was thus on this occasion condemned to be left behind alone, while the others set off joyously in five or six carriages to spend a day among the hop-pickers,—a treat to which I had been looking forward for weeks past. As they drove off, and I stood watching them sadly from the balcony, seeing their happy faces and listening to their gay laughter,

feeling myself to be an outcast from the paradise towards which they were setting forth,—it was then that the lame Fräulein von Bunsen, happening to look up, caught sight of me, and before I could hide myself, had waved her hand to me with a friendly smile that went far to reconcile me with my lot and the world in general. The greeting, the smile, fell on my wounded heart like balm. Up to that moment I had felt somewhat like a condemned criminal, fearing that I must be looked down upon and shunned by every member of that happy party, since it was known to them all that I was deprived by my own fault of the pleasure of joining them. But the kind thought, the kind smile, took away all the bitterness of my reflections, and were treasured piously in my memory. Years after, when I reminded dear Aunt Mim of the occurrence, I was still more pleased to hear from her that my absence had been much regretted, not by her alone, but by all the others, on that day. They were all so sorry for me, she said, and missed the wonderful stories, which I was never tired of telling on all such excursions. I had forgotten all about that, my best stories being always made up for myself alone, as I lay in bed in the morning, awake with the birds and listening to their singing, and feeling the spirit of song just as alive in me, while the rest of the house was still fast asleep. I only remembered her kindness and the comfort it gave me, and until she reminded me of it, had never thought again of that other unlucky day on which the wheel of the little donkey-carriage, with her mother and youngest sister sitting in it,

passed over my foot, at which I took care not to cry out or even make a face, and was only betrayed by the torn condition of my shoe, which led to my being scolded and sent home to have my foot bathed, instead of being allowed to continue my walk.

What a pretty picture Fräulein von Bunsen made in those days with her sweet expression, and pink and white complexion, leaning back in her bath-chair in her pink dress and hat with pink roses, pink veil and sunshade, looking a very rosebud herself! She was like my mother in this also, that the same treatment by which the latter was restored to health was very effective in her case too, and after undergoing it she spent many years in our house. Very intelligent, she possessed in a high degree the riper wisdom peculiar to those who have watched from afar the waves of life go surging by, themselves untouched by their tumult. An invalid looks on at the spectacle of human existence with something of the aloofness of a recluse, and is able to preserve the same childlike candour and crystalline purity of soul. No passion had ever stirred the depths of hers. It was like a deep transparent lake, in which earth and sky are reflected, clouds and sunshine, night and storm, and which yet remains unchanged through all. She reached her eightieth year in the same untroubled harmony of thought and feeling, her features very little altered by age, and her voice as sweet and clear as ever. Music was the very centre of her being, round which her whole existence revolved. I played duets with her for hours together, learning to know all the best

works of the great classic composers so thoroughly and well, it was as if the glorious floods of melody had passed into my veins, to flow there mingled with my blood for evermore. How often did we thus succeed in flinging away all sorrow and care, feeling our troubles ooze out at the finger-tips, and our souls grow lighter as we played! All the days of my youth seem to pass before me, whenever I hear Beethoven's Symphonies: certain of them,—the second, and that in C minor,—represent for me, as do Schubert's Quartet and Mozart's Symphony in G minor, very special phases of my existence, storms that were laid to rest by their potent spell. Our piano was a very old instrument whose keys were yellow with age, but to us it had the fulness of tone of a whole orchestra. And to strengthen the illusion, my father would often join us and hum or whistle some special passage as it is written for the different instruments, to try to give me some faint idea of the orchestral effect. In our enthusiasm we had soon forgotten the limitations of the means at our command, above all we forgot our own imperfections, we felt the whole orchestration, and in the grandeur of the conception the inadequacy of the performance was quite swallowed up. Is that not the best way to enjoy these divine masterpieces, the safest method of interpretation? It would not suffice, I am well aware, for the exigencies of a modern audience, incapable of drawing on the imagination to supply the deficiencies of execution. The hurry and bustle of the century leave no room for the modest efforts of a dilettante, imbued though these may

be with the spirit of truest adoration. Ours was the purest hero-worship, unmixed with aught of personal vanity or ambition. We simply thanked God, in the fulness of our hearts, that He had sent Beethoven to enrich and beautify the world!

At other times Aunt Mim would sit quietly at work in the library, whilst I wandered restlessly to and fro, like a caged lion, as she always said, telling her all that passed through my brain. It was just her unruffled calm that encouraged me to let loose on her the flood-gates of my soul. Surely those human beings come nearest perfection, who have preserved through life their angelic innocence, and it is perhaps to further this that such are often afflicted with some bodily infirmity, whereby the soul has power to raise itself above this earth.

By her perfect submission to the Divine Will, her firm faith which no doubt had ever clouded, no less than by her unswerving fidelity in friendship, and the cheerful, sunny temperament that had in it something of the playfulness and simplicity of a child, Aunt Mim was the pearl of her whole family and became invaluable and indispensable to ours. In those hours of greatest suffering, when words of good cheer could no more avail, then her quiet sympathy would yet often find means of making life a little more endurable to the poor sick child, of distracting my father's thoughts from present sadness. Only one so utterly detached from all thought of self could have refreshed and lightened that atmosphere of gloom. So heavily did it press at times on my childish mind, and so thoroughly had my mother

inculcated the belief in death as the supreme good to be wished and desired by us all, as the sole release from pain and suffering for ourselves and others, that during the weeks in which, after my brother Otto's birth, she lay between life and death, my governess often heard me praying that God would take her to Himself! It caused some perplexity, I believe, to her who overheard this singular prayer, to hit on the right method of bringing me to desist from it, without disturbing the effect of the maternal teaching, and she wisely contented herself with telling me that although it would doubtless be for Mamma's happiness to go to heaven, I need not ask for this, as God would take her to Himself in His own good time, and that moreover I should then see her no more. I was very much astonished at this, never having for a moment contemplated the possibility of being deprived of my mother's presence by death. My idea of heaven was of something so real and near, that whenever I gazed up into the blue sky, I felt sure that were my beloved ones there, I might at any moment see a little window opening to let me through to join them! Well is it with us if we can keep this belief through life, if like children, who have left their heavenly home too recently to accustom themselves to this earth, and could depart again from it without a pang, we can but bear in mind during the whole course of our dreary pilgrimage, that we have here no abiding place, and keep our hopes fixed on the life beyond!

If I appear to dwell overmuch on my inner life in childhood, it is for the sake of other children, many

of whom are perhaps as liable to be misunderstood as I was myself. Who was there, of the grown-up people around me, who could ever guess what was really passing in my mind? Taught that it was my duty to enliven and gladden others, I had schooled my face to an expression of perpetual cheerfulness, and should have considered myself eternally disgraced, had anyone ever surprised me in tears. It is only by the utmost kindness and tenderness, that we can hope to win the confidence of a proud and sensitive child, and break down the wall of reserve behind which it early learns to intrench itself.

Among the many agreeable recollections I retain of the house in Carlton Terrace, that of the entrance and staircase is especially vivid, both being carpeted, as was the passage leading to the rooms above, with soft green felt, while book-shelves lined every available space along the walls. Such a friendly, homelike impression was thus at once created, intensified by the habit of making of the entrance-hall, on which the doors of all the rooms opened, a favourite resort for reading or conversation. That green carpeting, of just the tint of the green baize of a billiard-table, on which one's eyes rested with so much pleasure, was no less agreeable to the ears, every sound being deadened, and the wheeled chairs of the invalids passing over it quite noiselessly.

Under Bunsen's auspices, a literary society was founded in Bonn, whose members—generally under pseudonyms—submitted their work for his approval. Among the translators, my mother distinguished herself by a version of the magnificent Paternoster

in Dante's *Purgatorio,* and another of Longfellow's *Song of the Old Clock,* with its mournful refrain—"Forever—never,—never—forever!"

Needless to say, though it is perhaps the proper place to insist upon it here, that I cannot pretend to describe the persons I have known, otherwise than just as they appeared to me at the time itself, these reminiscences being but the faithful transcription of the impressions received at different periods of my life, starting from my earliest childhood. Not for one moment can I profess to have been competent at the early age that then was mine, to form a correct idea of Bunsen's literary merits. Of his books, the "Signs of the Times" and others, the titles were all that was known to me, but my respect for the career of letters was innate and unbounded, and the fact that he was an author impressed me immensely. Sometimes I have vaguely wondered since, whether with him intellectual brilliancy in the best meaning of the word may not have outweighed depth of thought. But this is a mere conjecture, on which it would be unfair to base a judgment. One talent, that was indisputably his, and which since I have been able rightly to appreciate it I have often envied him, was Bunsen's marvellous facility for skimming through a book, and acquiring by that rapid survey a sufficient knowledge of its contents, to be able to discuss it afterwards, most minutely in all particulars with the author, as if he had read every word of it!

Another gift, which is sometimes denied to people of commanding intellect, but which invariably ren-

ders its possessor beloved, was also his in a supreme degree: the aptitude for drawing out all that was best and worthiest of notice in others, of making those around him feel, as if it were not merely *his* wit alone, but theirs also that made the conversation brilliant. A rare gift indeed! For all will agree, that pleasant as it is to be in the society of clever people, pleasantest of all is to have to do with those, who make us feel cleverer ourselves while we talk to them!

CHAPTER VIII

PERTHES

Our stay in Bonn was, as I have already pointed out, enriched by the intercourse into which we were thrown with many clever and interesting people, some of whom became true and trusted friends. Thus it happened that in a peculiarly dark and trying hour, we found in Clement Perthes the best and wisest counsellor, an unfailing source of help and comfort. It was to his special care that my father had confided us all, when he set out on that ill-advised journey in pursuit of health, from which he was only to return far more seriously ill than before. The doctors counted on the complete change, on the pleasurable excitement of travel, above all on his withdrawal from depressing surroundings, on his being for a time removed from the sad spectacle of daily suffering in his own household, as the best means of insuring his complete recovery. It was a well-meant, and carefully debated plan; but like many another issue of mere human wisdom, was not justified by events. However, after long deliberation and with many misgivings, my father was prevailed on to agree to the separation from wife and children for a whole year, setting out for America, accompanied by his young brother-in-law, Nicholas of Nassau. Brave as everyone struggled to be at parting, it was a most frightful wrench, and I remember seeing the tears

stream from my mother's eyes, directly she fancied herself unobserved. From that moment, it was on Perthes that devolved the task of cheering the anxious hearts and raising the sinking spirits of those who had stayed behind. And well and wisely did he set to work. Not merely with his practical good sense and strong understanding, but above all according to the dictates of his good heart and warm human sympathies, did he fulfil the mission confided to him, and his kindness and tact, more even than his cleverness and knowledge, have the first claim on our gratitude.

There was something exhilarating in the good humour that pervaded the whole person of Clement Perthes, a youthful, almost boyish love of mischief and fun, that was not belied by the expression of his eyes, narrow and obliquely set in the head, giving him somewhat of a Japanese cast of countenance. This fantastic appearance was increased by the strange fold or wrinkle beneath the eyes, deepening as he laughed and joked, while another line above the eyebrows seemed to impart a softer, almost feminine touch to the face, that was, however, neutralised by the determined expression of the thin lips. Everything seemed to furnish him with matter for a jest, and he used to call me the "hundred-and-first," insisting upon it that out of a hundred other little girls of my age, not one could be found who was the least like myself.

His children were our dearest playfellows. There were four sons and only one daughter, all of them good and amiable like their mother and himself,

but all of them dying young, to the unspeakable grief of the poor parents. It was hard indeed for them, to see their darlings go from them to the grave so young, but for these, for the children themselves, must they not afterwards often have blessed heaven in their hearts, that they should have been spared the misery inevitable to a longer sojourn on earth! The sons came often to us, and shared my brother's games, but he could not join them at their studies, as they were so much older than himself and naturally much more advanced. A little companion was found, the son of Professor Dorner, to learn Latin with him, but he also was older and had the start, my brother being only just seven, rather young perhaps for such serious studies. It is true that Otto was able to begin Greek when he was seven, but then he was altogether exceptional, having a love of study, in addition to his excellent abilities. Besides the sister of the young Perthes, I had another favourite companion in a daughter of Professor Sell, a young girl so versed in the Rhineland folk-lore, she had an unfailing supply of the most delightful tales and legends, all of which were instantly turned into impromptu plays, and acted by us with the greatest spirit and zest.

Nor was that special form of amusement confined to our school-room and our play hours; amateur theatricals of a more ambitious kind were a constant source of entertainment at the Vinea Domini, and afforded an opportunity for the display of some rather remarkable talent. In the first place there was my mother herself, an admirable performer,

and at the same time the most severe, most merciless of stage-managers. She would think nothing of having a scene rehearsed sixty times, till it went to her satisfaction. She was admirably seconded by the bevy of charming young girls that gathered round her—her own younger sisters, her niece of Solms-Laubach, the daughter of an intimate friend, the diplomatist, Heinrich von Arnim, and the two sisters von Preen, of whom the one was her own and the other her step-mother's lady-in-waiting. All these thronged, happy and light-hearted, round my mother, vying with one another in the effort to win her approbation. Sometimes there were most amusing scenes, that were not played on the mimic stage, as for instance that which I myself witnessed, of my cousin and Else Arnim sitting on the floor, one on each side of my mother's chair, disputing till they cried, as to which of them loved her best! And my mother cried too, with laughter! But whatever her own mood, well or ill herself, she never relaxed her efforts to provide wholesome and interesting entertainment for all these young people, and in everything she undertook Perthes was the most efficient auxiliary, as well as the surest adviser in any dilemma. Himself a professor at the university and resident in Bonn for many years, he was well acquainted with every section of society, and none could have been more competent than he, to advise her as to the selection of the elements from which her own circle should be composed. It was her desire to admit to her house every one possessing any claim to personal distinction, above all to

pre-eminence in the world of science, of letters and art. Among the younger men, those who were at that time studying at the university, how many there were who have since played a conspicuous part in the drama of European history! For the moment they were content to display their talents in the little theatre of the Vinea Domini. The drawing-room was divided, the one-half being converted into a stage, while in the other sat an audience composed in great part of scholars of note, all the learned dons and doctors of the university,—no mean tribunal certainly to sit in judgment on the performance. The actors had, however, little to fear even if judged by the most exacting standard, the histrionic ability of some of these young people being of a very high order, and they were well drilled in their parts, and the rehearsals superintended by the mistress of the house, until everything reached an unwonted pitch of perfection. In the pretty comedy of the "King's Lieutenant" the leading part was played by George Bunsen in a style that left no room for criticism. Years after I saw the famous actor, Haase, as Thorane, but I cannot see that the professional comedian in any way excelled the amateur in the part. That of Goethe, the youthful Goethe, in the same play, was taken by Prince Reuss, who looked the sixteen-year-old poet to the life, and the parents were impersonated by Prince Frederick William of Prussia as Privy-Councillor Goethe and Fräulein von Preen as the majestic Privy-Councilloress. The future Emperor Frederick was just a little stiff in his acting, hence the

staid part of the elderly man had been given him, but all played delightfully, the younger Fräulein von Preen also making a most successful entrance as the girl who runs in with her market basket on her arm. Some evenings only charades were represented, and on others tableaux vivants, in both of which the commanding officer of the Hussars, Count Oriola, a remarkably handsome man, was generally the most striking figure. I remember how splendid he looked as a brigand-chief, with one of my young aunts, afterwards Princess Waldeck, as his wife. He had married one of the daughters of Bettina von Arnim, but it is in some cases little more than a name or the vague outline of some person seen in my mother's drawing-room that I can call to mind. It may even appear surprising, that I should remember so much, as I was only eight years old at the time I speak of, but my recollections do in truth go much further back, as the following incident will show:

It concerns the departure of my little brother's wet-nurse, which took place when I could not have been more than two years and a half old. She was so unhappy at leaving, and wept so bitterly while being shown the big pile of house-linen which my mother gave her as a present, I thought I would find something better to console her, and rushing off to the nursery, I returned with one of my dearest possessions, a little doll's tea-kettle, which I tried to thrust into her hand. I can see distinctly her look of amazement, as she smiled through her tears, and hear the tone of my mother's voice, saying,—

"But what good can that be to her?" I felt as if I had had a bucket of cold water thrown over me, and I turned away with my treasure, disappointed and mortified at the fruitlessness of my good intentions. So I kept my poor little tea-kettle, and in course of time my own child played with it, as with many of my dolls and other playthings, with such affection had they been preserved. I may surely claim to have ever shown fidelity to the past, and as for my memory, I might liken it to lava, on which every impression from without, stamping itself at white-heat, is indelibly engraven for all time.

How well I remember the melancholy Christmas we spent that year in Bonn without my father, his absence taking all the joy out of the festival, in spite of my mother's efforts to prevent the happiness of others being dimmed by her own sadness. It was the very moment when the American mail was due, and on Christmas Eve we waited and waited, everyone hoping that at least the amount of gladness a letter could give might still be hers. And the last post did bring the expected missives, the well-known thin, pale blue envelopes, which Fräulein von Preen quickly tied on with red ribbons to the Christmas-tree. But at the sight of the handwriting my mother fairly broke down, and it was some time before she had recovered her composure sufficiently to collect, as was her habit, the whole household, children, friends, and the old servants round her, to listen with rapt attention to the interesting description of scenes in the New World which those pages contained.

Simple as it might at first sight appear, there is perhaps nothing so difficult as clearly to convey by words a picture of any human existence. Difficult enough it must be in any case, oneself to gain a clear conception of the real person, but how much more so to make the written portrait a true likeness. So indomitable was my mother's courage, so thoroughly did the natural elasticity of her temperament enable her to rise superior to every trial, many of her acquaintance might well see in her only the charming, clever and accomplished woman, the life and soul of the brilliant society she loved to gather round her, and which her own personality seemed so happily fitted to lead and dominate. But there was another, sadder side to her existence, no less real for being revealed alone to the members of her family and more intimate friends.

Exercising the same powers of attraction alike on young and old, and in her own person combining the keenest interest in every intellectual problem with a remarkable capacity for entering into any form of innocent mirth, the young mistress of the Vinea Domini was able to control and blend the different elements of her little society, to a harmony complete and pleasing to all. Representative men in science and art, in literature and politics, met there to discuss topics of gravest import; every talent found welcome recognition. What pretty water-colour sketches were made by the young Prince Reuss, whose long and eventful diplomatic career none yet foresaw! When, later on, I came across the drawings he had made of us children, I had a surprise

similar to that told in a preceding chapter, to see the melancholy expression I wore, but was assured by my mother that I did indeed often look thus. I struggled so perpetually to appear cheerful, I could hardly believe that anyone could have seen me looking sad; we keep count of the efforts we make, but cannot judge of the results we achieve. Of the Shakespeare readings, and lectures upon Shakespeare, given by Professor Löbell at our house, I can only speak from hearsay, for I was not present, but all the hearers pronounced them admirable, and I was sorry to be excluded, my curiosity being stimulated by the passages my mother had read to me from some of the plays, and I had wept bitterly over the pathetic scenes concerning poor little Prince Arthur. I was, however, sometimes allowed to make one of the party in the excursions down the Rhine, and I listened, now with delight to the melodious part-songs, now wondering, and storing up in my mind fragments of the animated discourse—on every subject, it seemed to me, of highest interest in heaven or earth—with which the boat's joyous passengers filled up the intervals of their singing. To draw others into conversation and lead them to impart their deepest thoughts, was one of my mother's special gifts. Young as she was, her mind had been early matured by sorrow, and she could associate herself as easily with the aims and aspirations of artists and scholars as with the plans of statesmen and politicians. The speculative curiosity of men of science ever had a peculiar fascination for her, and she was no less receptive for schemes of benevo-

lence and philanthropy. All phases of contemporary thought, all shades of opinion, were represented in her drawing-room, together with the harmless mirth, the love of amusement of the junior portion of the assembly. Never, however, in their moments of most reckless high spirits, did any of these young folk overstep the bounds of the strictest decorum and good taste. Had there been any such danger, a word, a look from my mother—nay, the mere presence of my grandmother, in her quiet stately dignity, would have sufficed to call the offender to order. The power can scarcely be over-rated, which well-bred and high-minded women may exercise over their surroundings. Nor had it yet been admitted as a possibility in good society, for young men to allow themselves to take the liberties of which in a modern drawing-room, they are too often guilty towards their hostesses. Once, on a lovely summer's night, two or three scions of princely houses among the students took it into their heads to serenade my mother from the river; but when next day, to their timid enquiry how she had liked the music, they received the chilling reply that she had certainly heard a noise, but thought it must be some drunken people returning home, their crestfallen looks showed that they would not venture to repeat the experiment.

In this light then, of the woman of varied interests and far-reaching influence did my mother appear to the world at large. It was reserved for her intimates, for her children and attendants, to see her in the hours of despondency, racked with pain, and tor-

tured still more by the gravest fears for the safety of her distant husband and of the child whose life seemed ever but to hang upon a thread. To those who knew of her sleepless nights, of her own bodily sufferings, and anxiety on behalf of others, she might well appear rather under the aspect of a martyr, bowed down by a load of physical and mental anguish, that must in time wear out her powers of resistance. She believed herself constantly to be at the point of death, and those around her often shared her fears.—"Let yourself cry, you have only too good reason for your tears!" was all our good old doctor could find to say to her by way of comfort, one day when he surprised her sobbing in despair.

In every emergency, whether he were called upon for practical advice, or simply to cheer and console when the cloud of sorrow seemed well-nigh overpowering, Perthes proved himself, as my father had foreseen, the kindest and most invaluable of friends. Even friendship, however, was powerless to soften the blow, when after the long separation, the months of weary waiting and intense anxiety, the travellers returned, for it but to become evident to my mother at the first glance at my father's pale face and wasted form, that the good results hoped for from the voyage were far from being realised. It seemed indeed at first sight to have only done him harm, for he was thinner than ever, with hollow cheeks and sunken eyes, suffering moreover from temporary surdity, after-effect of an acute attack of inflammation of the ear, by which he had been laid up

at New Orleans. To him the shock, the disappointment can have been no less severe, to find poor little Otto's condition so much worse, whilst my mother's state of health seemed also well nigh past hope. It was a melancholy return home. As the travellers approached the porch, towards which my mother's chair had been wheeled to meet them, the shouts of welcome sent up by the men-servants assembled on the steps, the waving of their plumed caps in the air at their master's approach, all this semblance of rejoicing died away in a general feeling of consternation, in the mute exchange of glances of dismay, in the unspoken dread of that which should come next.

Had we but known then, in that darkest, saddest hour, that help was already at hand, standing there ready to cross the threshold, when the need should be greatest!

CHAPTER IX

A FAITH-HEALER

It was in those days that there suddenly came wafted to us across the ocean the tidings of a wondrous discovery, a strange new pursuit for pastime, —I scarce know what to call it,—a new method of healing and new branch of scientific research, some would say, though certainly in this last particular it has not yet justified its claims to be admitted to rank as a science, but has like that other dark mysterious agent, electricity, of which we also know so little, to this day advanced but little beyond the infantile stage. Animal magnetism, table-turning, spirit-rapping, thought-reading and psychography, each and all of these names have been used in turn to designate the various manifestations of this hitherto unknown, or it may be merely neglected and forgotten force.

Now with regard to the phenomena I am about to describe, there could perhaps scarce be a more accurate and trustworthy witness than a child of nine years, absolutely healthy in mind and body, and bringing the quick observation and clear untroubled gaze of childhood to bear on these strange occurrences, without preconceived leanings towards belief or doubt, and even probably with a little less curiosity than might have belonged to one a few years older. To so young a child, the whole world is a subject of perpetual awe and wonder, nearly

every incident in its daily experience being startling and inexplicable, yet all accepted alike in the same spirit of implicit good faith. Was there then after all, in these new occurrences that set everyone talking, anything so much more wonderful than in a hundred others with which we were already familiar? Were we not acquainted with the miracle of the caterpillar's metamorphosis to the butterfly, of the transformation of the blossom into fruit? And could there be anything at once more natural and more terrible than those frightful spasms that racked my mother's whole frame, paralysing every movement of her limbs? That this never struck us as anything unusual or uncommon was shown by my answer to another little girl, who had asked me to suggest a new game.—"Let us play at being mother and child," I promptly replied, "and you shall be the mother, and must sit still in this chair, as you cannot walk about." And I was honestly surprised both at my little companion's astonishment and also to hear my mother's voice calling to me from the next room, enquiring if I thought that a nice sort of game, to be making fun of my mother's ill-health? I was dreadfully discomfited, but I had meant no harm at all, it simply arose from the impossibility of dissociating in my own mind the idea of one's mother from that of being lame. I had seen too how completely medical science had been at fault, just with those of my own family who had been obliged to have recourse to the doctors' skill, one celebrated practitioner after another having tried in vain to bring about some improvement in my

father's health, or to find out a course of treatment that should alleviate my mother's sufferings, and bring some relief to the constant pain that made my younger brother's life a martyrdom. It was perhaps the reiterated failure of any of the old recognised methods to work a cure, that rendered us all quite free from prejudice against the pretensions of outsiders, and hearing so much said of the wonderful cures wrought by magnetism, I felt no surprise when I learnt that it was to be tried in my mother's case. Soon the professional magnetiser appeared upon the scene, in the person of a very stout Englishwoman with beady black eyes, to whom my brothers and I immediately took an intense dislike, on account of her appearance and her very disagreeable manner towards us. Her skill did procure for my mother a little of the rest she stood so much in need of, as the operator could by means of the magnetic passes, or even by merely laying her hand on the patient's forehead, send her for hours into a deep sleep, from which she could not awake of her own accord. But the fact that the magnetiser had, as she boasted, herself brought fifteen children into the world, had not apparently imbued her with very tender feelings towards children in general, and the influence she was not slow in acquiring over her patient she so thoroughly abused in tyrannising over us, that we three cordially detested her, and were thankful when a too glaring usurpation of authority led to her summary dismissal. Her brief stay in our midst had, however, awakened among us all the desire to ascertain

by similar experiments, what latent magnetic power might possibly reside in some of us, and it was very soon shown that my uncle, Nicholas of Nassau, was possessed of a quite exceptional degree of the mesmeric or hypnotic force, which he, a lively, thoughtless youth of twenty, did not scruple to use for all sorts of practical jokes. A favourite one was to prevent his sister's governess from getting up out of her chair; do what she would, she was as if nailed down to it whenever he chose to forbid her to rise, and he would even sometimes mount his horse and ride away for a couple of hours, deaf to the entreaties and adjurations of his victim. Another time he ordered her to put out her tongue, in the midst of a ceremonious Court dinner, and almost crying with indignation, she was forced to obey. His sisters found it equally impossible to disobey whatever extravagant commands he might lay on them, such as forcing my mother to stand still holding out her hand whilst he threatened to aim a heavy blow at it with his riding-whip. Such displays of his extraordinary and inexplicable powers afforded great amusement to himself and others, above all to the child spectators, who laughed heartily to see their elders for once reduced to such submissiveness. It was therefore a sad disappointment to us when, in consequence of the fits of hysterics into which one or two ladies had been thrown by some of my uncle's pranks, he was obliged to desist from them. We little ones had enjoyed them the more, that he never tried them on us, from whom it would indeed have been superfluous to exact obedience in this

fashion, trained as we were to carry out unquestioningly and with military promptness and exactitude, whatever orders were given us. For this was in the old days, when it seemed to be a recognised thing, that children had come into the world just to do what they were told, and learn whatever was taught them! Nobody thought of asking them if they found it a tedious restraint to behave properly, nor were they consulted as to whether their lessons bored them. If in my youthful days, for instance, I played badly in my piano-lesson, it was so much the worse for me, as I soon found out, when the music-master had gone. As for over-pressure, the word had not been invented then, and nervous fatigue, hysteria and neurasthenia, with all of which the modern child is familiar, had not yet been heard of. Our elders certainly themselves set us a good example in all such respects, and I can remember the severe animadversion passed on the poor degenerate creatures who first indulged in the above unbecoming weaknesses. All through her married life my grandmother had to stand every evening with her ladies, in full dress upright beside the billiard-table, to watch her lord and master's play, and neither she nor anyone else dared to be tired or feel bored, until the match was finished. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that people in those days knew how to be bored to death with the utmost decorum! There were no comfortable easy-chairs to lean back in; if one sat down at all, it was bolt upright on a chair of most uncompromising severity. For our lessons we had very hard high wooden chairs, from

which our poor little legs dangled till they ached, very different from the nice comfortable schoolroom chairs with their foot-rest, which children have now. And worst of all, there was the dreadful invention for deportment, a horrible heart-shaped contrivance, of iron covered with leather, into which we were strapped to make us hold ourselves upright. To my indescribable humiliation, I was sometimes obliged to go for a walk with the odious machine fastened to my back. Even this seemed quite mild though, compared to the means employed in a former generation, one of my great-aunts being able to tell of the spiked collar, which in addition to the iron back-board, she was forced to wear, to prevent her from ever allowing her head to droop. Was it the effect of this instrument of torture, that in her ninetieth year, she had never been known to lean back in her chair?

Out of this hard training, of this undue repression, and as a natural consequence too of the incessant cupping and bleeding, practised on the former generation as a remedy for all existent and non-existent maladies, there came forth another, debilitated, unnerved, an easy prey to the whole host of nervous disorders lying in wait for it. I have lived through and looked on at every phase of the transformation. Healthy as I was, I should hardly have escaped the drastic measures to which the so-called plethoric were subjected, had it not been sufficiently proved that their application had been injurious rather than beneficial to my mother. The immense strides made by medical science of recent years, make it difficult

to judge rightly the mental attitude of those, who in their impatience of the inanity and futility of orthodox treatment, seem formerly to have welcomed and blindly followed the advice of every quack, calling himself a mesmeriser. We should be slower to condemn them, had we also suffered from the ignorance and incompetence of the regular practitioner, and perhaps be equally willing to sign a pact with the Evil One and his agents, in order to regain the blessing of health! It was this tendency that led to the first great disappointment of my life, which I experienced when I was only five years old, in the following manner:

I had a little birth-mark on my left cheek, which was a great source of vexation to my parents, nobody understanding in those days how to remove anything of the sort. They were therefore all the more readily disposed to put faith in the assertion of a wandering charlatan, of his ability to make it disappear. I was fetched from my lessons by my father, placed in a chair, and the stranger proceeded to apply a dark fluid from a little phial to the spot, assuring my parents that when this had dried up, they would find on its removal no trace of the mole left. Somehow or other I had understood that by means of this magical process, I should never be naughty again. As might be expected, when the stain of the fluid was washed away, the mole was there just as before, with a slight scar into the bargain, and I was as naughty as ever! That was my first real big disappointment. The next came when I was six, with my first glimpse

of the sea. When we reached the shore to go on board the boat, it was low tide, and instead of the wide far-reaching plain of water I was prepared to see, there was nothing but sand, with a few pools. To my mother's apostrophe,—"Look, Elizabeth! there is the sea!" I could not find a word to say in reply, I was too bitterly disappointed. I had expected to behold a great towering wall of water, like that I was familiar with in the pictures of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Children of Israel. And here was nothing but sand, with a few wretched pools! Afterwards I saw the great expanse of water, always in movement, and stretching out far away, but it was too late then, the first impression was over and all was spoilt. The third disappointment came much later, at first sight of Rome, and does not belong here.

To return to my story. In one of my uncle's letters from America, he told us of his visit to a house, where the guests were all amusing themselves by setting a table in motion by simply letting their hands rest lightly on it, as they stood round. It had interested him, but he had not been able to induce my father to take any part in the proceedings, the latter declining even to countenance such nonsense, declaring himself the enemy of every sort of humbug. At home, on the contrary, curiosity was immediately aroused, our former experience with the magnetiser and the discovery of my uncle's marvellous powers, having to a certain extent initiated us into the mysteries of the occult. Young and old, children and grown-up people, we were all pressed

into the service, and were soon all standing in a ring round a very big table, our hands resting on it, so that one's little finger touched that of one's neighbour on either side. Thus we stood and waited, with some impatience, and a good deal of inward merriment, to see what would occur. Just as we were getting thoroughly disheartened and tired out, a tiny tremor was felt in the table, which then, in spite of its great weight, actually began to move from the spot. Naturally, each one accused the other of pushing, but that explanation would have been neither satisfactory nor admissible, standing as we were with our hands in full view of one another, so that no attempt at cheating could have passed unperceived. And our astonishment was increased when we observed how when my mother was wheeled into the room, she had but to lay her finger ever so lightly on the table, for it at once to begin to move quicker, even setting off to rush about in all directions, so that she had to be pushed after it in her chair. We all followed, with peals of laughter at the strange sight, the ungainly movements of this new sort of dancing-bear, and so much amusement did this afford, that we set to work at once to experiment on all sorts of other inanimate objects. We soon found that all were not in the same degree susceptible of locomotion, nor were all human beings equally endowed with the latent force by which automatic movement could be imparted to things usually inert. Count Oriola proved to be the possessor of a quite exceptional degree of this psychic or magnetic force; he had only to stretch out his

hand within a few paces of a small table, and it immediately came marching towards him, apparently with great glee, to our inexpressible delight, but to the unspeakable horror of my governess, from whose sitting-room the table had been borrowed, and who energetically refused to receive such an impish piece of furniture back again!

Not only tables, but chairs, sofas, all sorts of things seemed now suddenly to have become capable of walking about; it was even told of a young girl staying in our house, that holding her hand over a big glass shade that covered a clock, to her surprise the shade lifted itself up in the air to reach her hand, and remained for a time firmly fixed to it. Naturally enough, the thing being once admitted in principle, its possibility established beyond a doubt, there were no bounds, no limits to our curiosity, and every other form of amusement was cast into the background by this. It was much more interesting than simple mesmerising, and instead of being like that confined to an experiment on one person at a time, in this all could take part. We moreover obtained the proof that the force by which these results were obtained, was not entirely confined to certain more highly-favoured individuals, but lay in some degree latent in everyone, and could be immensely developed by practice. Nor was this ever attended with the least inconvenience to the experimenter, an effort of the will, a certain tension and concentration of mind, being the chief conditions of success. It was, however, also of great moment that such experiments should be undertaken in a proper

spirit, *i.e.*, seriously, with a real desire to investigate their nature and to turn them to the advantage of one's fellow-beings, for we soon noticed that those who treated the matter as a mere joke, approaching it in a frivolous mood, generally failed in all they attempted. As might be expected, the persons whose fund of magnetism was most considerable, proved also to be those who could most easily induce in others the magnetic trance. All seemed to resolve itself into that one process of mental concentration, and someone remarked that this word "concentration" was the one most often heard, and that formulated the rule of life and scheme of education in our family. Perhaps I owe it to the habit acquired then, that I am never absent-minded, but always able to concentrate my thoughts on the matter in hand, and taking into consideration my lively imagination, I think this may be looked upon as an educational triumph!

Whilst "concentration" was thus the order of the day among us, it happened that my mother heard of the marvellous cures, recalling those told of in the Bible, being worked in Paris by a "Faith-healer," as we should certainly now call him, since they were effected by no other means than the simple laying-on of hands. One of the patients then under treatment, and making rapid progress, was Schleiermacher's daughter, Countess Schwerin, whose case so nearly resembled my mother's own, that the latter could not refrain from writing to tell my father all she had heard, with the result that on his way home from America he stopped in Paris, to make further

enquiries. He called on the magnetiser, whose name was Count Szápary, and begged him to undertake my mother's case. This request met at first with a decided refusal, it being impossible for him, the Count stated, to abandon for a new patient the many now being treated by him, these being, moreover, already so numerous that he could not think of adding to them. He did, however, in the end so far modify his refusal, as to promise that in the course of a journey he was about to take, and which should lead him Rhinewards, he would certainly pay my mother a visit, and see what could be done for her.

Three days had not yet passed over our heads in Bonn since my father's return, when the little garden gate was suddenly flung open by a stranger of distinguished presence—in spite of a slight limp (the result, we afterwards learned, of a carriage accident, some time previous, in Hungary)—and in whose thick dark moustache the first silvery threads were beginning to appear, though not yet in the rather long and wavy thick dark hair, a lock of which, escaping, was continually falling over his forehead. My father went forward to meet this gentleman, whom he introduced as Count Szápary, and who brought the scrutinising glance of his big black eyes to bear on our little group, with but little, at first sight it seemed, of the kindly smile which on better intimacy lit up his face so constantly. His own wonderful powers, which he was now bent on using for the good of mankind, had been revealed to him by chance, some might call it, in reality by

his despairing efforts to procure by mesmerism the boon of sleep and respite from pain for an invalid daughter, given up by the regular doctor. To his glad astonishment, not only did the magnetic passes send the patient into a refreshing slumber, but a repetition of the experiment was equally successful, and, being persevered with, in time restored her to health. In his gratitude for his child's life being spared, the father determined to use his gift henceforth for the benefit of others, and in order to cultivate it systematically, he went to Paris to study medicine for a time, and establishing himself there, the cures wrought by him were very soon widely talked of. There was a minute of suspense as the thoughtful, enquiring glance rested on my mother, and we trembled lest the objections urged against my father's pleadings in Paris should still be maintained. But at that critical moment, poor little Otto happened to join us, and again the sharp restless eyes travelled from the sorely tried young mother to the unhappy child, and back again to the pale, emaciated father, already in a rapid decline, and all hesitation was at an end. The spectacle of so much suffering was decisive for the man whose whole life was given up to alleviating human misery. Without further demur he agreed to devote his time, his skill, to the case before him. "But," he hastened to add, after a rapid examination of his patient, "your life I can perhaps save, more I cannot say, I cannot promise that you will ever recover the use of your limbs!" And indeed at that time it looked as if the one leg were completely atrophied, it was

as if withered—literally reduced to skin and bone. When our new friend took his leave, it was with the promise to return in a very few weeks' time, to accompany us himself to Paris, as he feared that without him my mother might not even survive the journey.

So we set out for Paris, my brother Wilhelm and I in one railway compartment with tutor and governess, Otto in another for himself with his faithful attendant, our good old nurse, and my mother in hers, in the hammock slung for her, with my father and Fräulein von Preen close at hand, and Count Szápary standing beside her, steadying the hammock with the one hand, whilst with the other he continued uninterruptedly making the mesmeric passes, to still the frightful paroxysms of pain, which almost threatened to prove fatal during the journey. Terrible as it was, it yet differed from former journeys undertaken under like circumstances, in the absence of the overpowering smell of chloral, ether, and other medicaments, for all such were from this moment abolished and never heard of more. It was not astonishing, when we did arrive safely and were installed in the house taken for us in the Champs Elysées, that directly he had seen his patient carried upstairs and put to bed, Count Szápary should have sought his own room, and falling exhausted on his bed, have slept on without waking for ten hours.

Next day began the treatment—no easy matter, as my mother's extreme weakness made it necessary to proceed with the utmost precaution, and Count Szápary afterwards owned that he had more than

once feared that she might die while undergoing it. But he persevered, and was rewarded at the end of six months by perceiving a faint twitching in the toes of the till then apparently lifeless foot. "Ah! you will be able to walk again after all!" he exclaimed in his delight, and continued the massage so vigorously and to such good purpose, that life seemed to return gradually to the whole of the paralysed limb, and in the course of a few weeks the patient could actually take a few steps. Only a very few at first, leaning on her companion's arm, and with the tears streaming down her cheeks with the effort and the pain, sometimes severe enough to make her faint away before it was over. But through it all she could see us watching her, the first time she was taken into the garden, and she told us afterwards of our anxious faces, mine flushed with excitement as I ran towards her, whilst Wilhelm turned deadly pale as he tried to move away every little pebble in her way in the path. Then, a few days later, Otto also was allowed to look on, and for him it was something even more solemn and wonderful, for it was the first time in his life that he had seen his mother able to walk a step. Without a word he went up to her, took her by the hand, and walked slowly beside her the whole time, in perfect silence. For all of us it was the grandest and most impressive event of our whole childhood, something that seemed to partake of the nature of a miracle, and that brought the stories of miraculous cures in times of old quite near to us, making them a more living reality than to most people, since we

had ourselves with our own eyes witnessed something similar in the person of one so near and dear to us. It will readily be believed, that our admiration and gratitude for him who had wrought this marvel knew no bounds. To say that we looked upon him as a saint, seems but a feeble expression of the feeling of veneration with which we regarded him.

Of the actual working of the cure, of the mode of treatment, we saw nothing, and heard but little; I only know that little by little, the terrible convulsions were transformed into regular exercise of the muscles, in fact into an involuntary process of therapeutic gymnastics. In course of time, not only was the cure complete, but her own fund of natural magnetism had been discovered to be so exceptional, that my mother was anxious to celebrate her restoration to health by performing a like good work for others, and began visiting Count Szápary's other patients with him, undertaking a portion of the treatment. At her pressing invitation the lame Fräulein von Bunsen came to stay with us, and thanks to the combined efforts of my mother and Count Szápary, she also was set on her feet again and able to walk after being for five-and-twenty years considered beyond all hope of recovery!

For my mother it was the beginning of a new life in more meanings than one, for it was now her turn, after her own miraculous cure, to cultivate and turn to account in the service of humanity, the gift bestowed upon her unawares. She perhaps never became quite so strong as had been at first hoped,

and, in fact, she often felt far from well, but the lameness never returned. And it very soon became clearly established, that the possession of magnetic force by no means corresponds to our physical strength or indeed to our bodily health. Concerning this, very thorough investigations were made by my father, who would not have tolerated the idea of anything being done by his wife which could possibly have been harmful to her own health. On that point there could be no shadow of doubt; our experiments in mesmerising and table-turning furnishing constant examples of the presence of these powers in a transcendent degree in persons of specially fragile build and constitutional delicacy. It was just by these that feats were accomplished, which would not merely have taxed their ordinary strength, but would have been impossible to the strongest man. All this will no longer seem so very surprising at the present day, but the period I deal with is of fifty years ago, when these marvels were not yet subjects of common parlance. No Charcot had yet made his experiments with suggestion and hypnotism; indeed, the very names were scarcely known. My father, who was so little inclined to credulity that friends and relations had dubbed him the unbelieving Thomas, gave himself up to the serious study of the question. His naturally philosophic bent found here ample matter for reflection. "I have not the dogmatic arrogance," he was accustomed to say, "which would enable me to deny the existence of phenomena, simply because I fail to comprehend them!" Investigating them in

this spirit, from the purely scientific point of view, he acquired the conviction that they were manifestations of an inner life, the proof of a persistence of thought independent of cerebral cognition, and he therefore gave to the book he wrote on the subject, the title, "Subconscious Mental Life." I am aware that the theory he upheld is now much contested, that there are those who, while they do not dispute the genuineness of the manifestations, would ascribe them to quite another cause, looking upon them as of purely objective nature, and entirely independent of the medium. Time alone can decide which of these two schools of psychical research is the better justified. Then, at all events, it had not yet occurred to any of us to seek the explanation of these phenomena from without, everything appearing sufficiently to demonstrate their origin in our own mentality; a belief which did not, however, in the least preclude our full recognition of the superiority of the results achieved, to all similar performances by the same individual in the normal state. Our experiments were now no longer confined to mere spirit-rapping or observations made on subjects during the mesmeric trance; they were henceforth specially directed to psychography, and with the most gratifying results. It was perhaps the manifestations in this higher sphere which overcame the last barriers of my father's incredulity; the simple manner in which they were obtained, by means of a pencil, passed through a large woollen ball, on which two persons placed their hands, absolutely preventing any possibility of fraud. Very often he made

the experiment himself, together with one other person, generally a young girl whose store of magnetism was known to be above the average, and he was able thus to convince himself that the movements of the pencil, tracing characters with lightning rapidity in its course across the paper, were entirely independent of human agency.

Questions of deepest import were asked, answers on subjects either of private or of general interest obtained, and many a philosophic doubt laid to rest, by this spirit-writing. And these messages, I cannot sufficiently repeat, seemed to have as a rule little in common with the mental powers or culture of the person through whom they were transmitted, being on an altogether different plane, a higher intellectual level than that of society in general. Certainly no means was neglected of raising the tone of conversation among the ever-widening circle of friends who assembled for these *séances;* all frivolous chatter was banished, gossip was a thing utterly unknown, and it is hardly too much to say, that it was in a well-nigh religious spirit that most of us gathered round the table on which the manifestations took place. Among the guests in our house, was the aged musician, Neukomm, and very often, as a preliminary to the evening's proceedings, he would seat himself at the organ, and by a soft and solemn prelude would induce in all present a frame of mind suitable to the solemnity of the occasion. As I was now in my twelfth year, and my mind unusually developed for my age, I was allowed to participate in all that went on. Above all, I loved to

hear my father talk of those philosophic questions that occupied his own thoughts, and it was from this time that dated the delightful long walks we took together, in which he instructed me in the history of philosophy, explaining to me the various philosophic systems, and reading to me passages from his own writings, thereby giving me my first insight into the metaphysical problems in which his soul took refuge from the noise and bustle of the world. His dream it doubtless was, to make of me a philosopher like himself, and his enthusiasm and earnestness could not fail to arouse my interest in the themes on which he waxed so eloquent; but my own bent was a different one—the field of metaphysical speculation, as thrown open to me by my beloved and revered father, might well entice my spirit awhile,—my sojourn there could be but brief, it was in another dreamland I was eventually to find my home, and already, unknown to everyone, I had made my first excursions, my first timid flights within those realms. Everything I heard, everything I saw, each fresh addition to my store of knowledge, each wonderful revelation of the world above and beyond the perception of the senses, into which it was our privilege to obtain a glimpse by the marvellous experiences chronicled above—all this did but furnish material for my active imagination, and was absorbed, and pondered over, and woven into the intangible, unsubstantial fabric of many a future song. Meantime, the influences of the hour were naturally all-powerful in magnifying the veneration in which I held my parents. It was in truth

no ordinary every-day existence which they led; and that which was most remarkable was the perfect harmony in aim and action of these two so dissimilar natures, and their admirable co-operation in furthering the well-being of their fellow-creatures, the special gifts of each being employed to the same end, my father's theoretically, my mother's in the direction of practical utility. Of the cures which the latter was enabled to work, I shall tell elsewhere; suffice it to say in this place, that they were effected with a swiftness, and attended with circumstances so remarkable as to surpass if anything those of Szápary himself. In later years, when the extraordinary cures wrought by Metzger and other masseurs were spoken of in my mother's presence, it did not astonish anyone who knew her that she should calmly remark, with a pitying smile—"That is all very well, but it is nothing to what I could do! I had but to stretch out my hand and say—Rise up, thou art healed!"

The somnambulistic experiments I witnessed were perhaps more marvellous than all the rest. It would almost seem as if in the case of the somnambulist the law of gravitation were abolished, so entirely free from the trammels of material existence does the human body appear to be while in this state. Certainly my mother often appeared to us no longer to tread the earth, she seemed to float rather than walk, and any further and more complete abolition of what we are accustomed to term the laws of nature, would assuredly have occasioned among us no surprise at all. No amount of famil-

iarity, on the other hand, could ever do away with the feeling of awe, with which my mother's ecstatic trance invariably inspired us. Unconscious of all around, she sang and prayed—the words and melody alike of her own composition; it was a deeply moving spectacle.

Brought up in an atmosphere so highly charged with the marvellous, it has ever been impossible to me to assume a sceptical attitude towards mysteries which elude my comprehension. The word supernatural seems to me to be an absolute contradiction in terms. Who are we that we should dare to set limits to the forces of nature, and to decide that this or that occurrence is beyond her control? Did we but understand such events aright, we must needs acknowledge them to be perfectly natural. Egyptian priests of old, and Indian fakirs of the present day may alike laugh us to scorn, that in our ignorance and impotence we presume to question the existence of forces whose workings they have fathomed and turned to such good account. Recourse to the supernatural is but a return to nature. For this reason it may well be that outside the domain of surgery, wherein such incontestable triumphs have been achieved, of the whole of our modern medical practice the so-called nature-cures will in the end alone survive. They rest indeed on a purely rational basis, the treatment being none other than the art of transforming pathological phenomena into therapeutical processes.

I refer of course to the treatment I have myself seen practised and to the examples quoted here.

The system made considerable demands on the good-will and concurrence of the patient, these being, in the opinion of Count Szápary, indispensable conditions of its success. An entirely different principle is acted upon, I am aware, by those who practise massage at the present day. With them the patient remains entirely passive, and the massage itself is alone supposed to work the cure. I will not enter into the question of the respective merits of the two systems, I would merely point out the benefit that accrued to the patient from the independence to which he was encouraged by the earlier one. All who had sufficient energy to follow the prescribed path, were able in course of time to continue the treatment alone, whilst such as were found incapable of making the necessary effort for recovery, and disposed to fall into a morbid state of dependence on the doctor, were dismissed as a hindrance to the others. Every phase of illness was treated as a stepping-stone to progress, every symptom turned to account; the somnambulistic trance, for instance, was made use of as a stage in the transition from sickness to health, a state of repose deeper and more refreshing than ordinary sleep, during which by no other means than the rest prescribed by nature, the weakened frame and overstrung nerves might recover their equilibrium. Every step in the treatment was accompanied by prayer; it bore indeed from first to last a markedly religious character. All the members of our little circle felt themselves lifted above the common wants and desires of humanity by the nobler prospects which the

wider horizon opened out before them; we were as neophytes whom some rite of initiation sets apart for holier purposes. It was difficult to live invariably on that exalted level, the circumstances might not always be propitious, and on myself they seemed sometimes to bear too heavily. It was the sight of so much suffering, the perpetual intercourse with invalids, that preyed on my spirits and against which my own youthful health and strength could at times scarce react. But at such moments my mother's iron discipline stood me in good stead. I had been so well drilled, and had my feelings under such perfect control, that neither to her nor anyone else, and scarce even to myself would I ever have acknowledged that life had sometimes become a burden to me. I knew that for the sake of others I must keep a smiling face, and do my best to cheer them, whatever my own sadness.

Count Szápary was always cheerful, or at any rate always wore an appearance of cheerfulness, laughing and singing with the joviality of a true Hungarian, and rejoicing in magnificent health and strength. This doubtless aided him to give confidence to his patients, who must have been trying at times with their whims and caprices. It has been given to few to benefit their fellow-creatures to a like extent, or to reap the harvest of benedictions that will forever blossom round his name.

CHAPTER X

MARY BARNES

I SEE her still, in her plain black dress, coming towards the castle from the landing-stage of the steamer, and crossing the quadrangle with soft, noiseless tread, as gentle and calm as the breath of the evening breeze, bringing with her an atmosphere of comfort and peace of which we became conscious even before she had crossed the threshold.

We were looking out for her with impatience and some misgivings, my brother Wilhelm and I, for the advent of a new nurse is an event of no small importance in children's lives, and already, scarce three and four years of age as we were respectively, we had undergone the trial of parting with the dear old one who had made herself so justly beloved, and whose place was taken by a younger woman, whom we detested with equal vehemence and on equally good grounds. So we ensconced ourselves firmly in the broad window-sill to have a better view of the new-comer, wondering to ourselves which of her two predecessors she would resemble. Our doubts were dispelled even before Barnes entered the house; the quick, unerring instinct of childhood told us that many happy days were in store for us in the care of this good, kind soul, who came along as noiselessly as a leaf wafted hither by the wind. I do not think she was at all beautiful—in point of fact rather a plain-featured elderly woman, with

at times a decided squint; but our eyes had quickly discerned the beauty of the soul under that homely exterior, and lovely she ever remained to us. We saw in her a sort of guardian angel, shielding us from every peril that might beset the path of childhood, watching over our health with untiring zeal, and entirely wrapped up in our happiness. For herself she seemed to ask nothing, to want nothing, to have no wishes or desires beyond those that affected the well-being of her little charges. That the motherly instinct should be so strong in her, and should, so to say, pervade her whole person, was the less surprising considering that she had, as she herself told us, from the age of ten played the part of the mother they had lost to her own younger brothers and sisters. She was the ideal nurse; scrupulous in the fulfilment of all her duties, and her honest simplicity coupled with such innate delicacy of feeling as to lend a certain refinement to her whole person. She was at her happiest as she sat, needle in hand, watching our games, and from time to time laying down her work, the more thoroughly to enter into our merriment; we might laugh and romp to our heart's content, her calm was unruffled, her patience inexhaustible. Our childish intuition had not been at fault in foreseeing that under her kindly sway our nursery would once more become a little paradise, the dearest corner for us in the whole house. We should have asked nothing better than to be left there as long as possible; but alas! the governess was already on the way to whom I was to be handed over, and who was antipathetic to me

from the very first, her cleverness availing nothing to conceal that she was both underbred and ill-tempered. I fled as often as I could from her harshness and bad manners, back to the dear old nursery—back to the good angel, Barnes! I was surely somewhat young to have been removed at all from those gentle influences, but the step had been judged a wise one by my parents, in order to turn to account as early as possible the magnificent health and excellent abilities with which I was blessed. To this young, but physically fragile couple—the valetudinarian father, pale, melancholy, of sedentary and studious habits, and the mother, whose own natural liveliness was being undermined by the attacks of an insidious and baffling malady—to them there may well have been something disconcerting and almost alarming in the temperament of such a child, the quintessence of health, restless as quicksilver and blithe as a bird, in whose young limbs the joy of living pulsed wildly and on whose lips snatches of song were forever alternating with ringing laughter! It cannot be wondered at if they only saw in my high spirits a sure sign of frivolity, and that on every occasion on which my indomitable will showed itself, I should simply have been condemned as headstrong and obstinate.

I seized, then, every possible opportunity to rush off to the nursery, to shake myself free of all fetters and restraint—to breathe freely once more! I kept up the habit for some time of going every now and then to spend a quiet hour with Barnes, helping her with her mending and sewing, for her needle was

never idle, and it was so soothing to sit and talk with her. I have said how she watched over us, tending us with such admirable care that my brother's health improved from the day she entered our house. But all that was nothing compared to the superhuman devotion, the heroic self-sacrifice of the life which began for her from the moment of poor little Otto's birth. She it was who first discovered what was wrong with the unfortunate child, and with tenderness and loving care that are beyond all praise and which words are inadequate to describe, she gave herself up heart and soul to his service, mitigating as far as might be the terrible sufferings that made a martyrdom of his short life. Day and night she was at her post, indefatigable, uncomplaining, holding him in her arms for hours at a time to ease his pain and enable him to breathe with a little less difficulty, her whole thought how to bring some relief to the poor tortured little frame. What those tortures were, none knew so well as the faithful Barnes, and I have therefore chiefly borrowed her own simple words, when I have tried to tell the story of my poor little brother's life. He did not live to complete his twelfth year, but in that short space of time he had suffered so unutterably and with so little respite, one could not have wished the trial to be prolonged. Hardest of all it was to his devoted nurse to leave him before the end, but even that sacrifice was demanded of her, my mother believing it to be for the boy's good and all important for the formation of his character that he should not be left too long under feminine control.

Just as she had never complained of fatigue or discomfort during all the sleepless nights and weary days in which she had watched beside him, so now this hardest trial brought no murmur to her lips. She accepted it with the same pious resignation, bravely hiding under a smiling face her own aching heart, in order to soften the pangs of separation to her beloved foster-child. Otto had always called her Nana, and Nana she remained for us, even after she had left us altogether to take charge of the nursery of the Grand Duchess of Baden, in whose service she died.

But before the end came for Otto, Barnes was sent for once more, and stayed with him some days, days unspeakably precious to both, until all was over. And again she had the courage, the supreme courage of true affection, to smile as she bade him that last farewell!

Were it not for my profound conviction, that in publishing these reminiscences, I am but extending to a larger circle of friends and sympathisers the confidence already reposed in some, I should never have the courage to throw open the sacred precincts of the Past. But the lesson of these lives may be useful thus, and bring hope and comfort to souls still fainting under their heavy burden.

Above all do I feel it a duty, when I hear so much said of the worthlessness of human nature, to tell of the good which I have witnessed and experienced. Fate has perhaps in this dealt more kindly with me than with most, for I have met far more good than evil, and have seldom been disappointed and deceived where I have bestowed affection and trust.

Can one even believe in absolute malevolence? May not those who appear animated by ill-will sometimes be simply mistaken? Surely the noble-minded Lamartine was right, when he spoke of "les pauvres méchants!" With some of them it is perhaps sheer clumsiness; they think to show their affection, but its object is crushed to death by it, as surely as the victim of a bear's uncouth embrace!

How should those who are born with a bear's ungainly paws, bear the branch of palm or scatter lilies throughout the world! There are a few, like our good Barnes, whose hands were made to carry lilies. Wherever she turned, balsam sprang forth. Her own life was joyless, but for the comfort it brought to others, and therein she found abiding happiness.

Barnes lies buried in the church at Meinau, and a tablet with a most touching and beautiful inscription is put up to her memory. But what is that beside the tablet on which her memory is engraved within my heart!—I still see her with her eyes riveted on Otto's face, following every change in it with an expression of the deepest concern, and the words, "that poor child!" ever and anon breaking involuntarily from her lips. Of herself, her own sufferings, her own fatigue, never a word; it was always of *him* she spoke, of his marvellous patience, his unexampled fortitude. Surely she must be rewarded now, in seeing him no longer writhing with pain, but radiant in health and youthful beauty, having shuffled off this mortal coil, to live on triumphant with the life of the spirit.

CHAPTER XI

THE FAMILY VALETTE

It was on my governess, Fräulein Josse, that devolved the pleasing task of bringing a little innocent amusement into our lives. She lent herself the more willingly to this, I fancy, that she was often in her inmost soul distressed to see us thus early initiated into so much sorrow and suffering, such painful daily experiences naturally robbing us of the healthy unthinking lightheartedness, befitting our age. Nor was she in the least a partisan of the uncompromisingly matter-of-fact system of education on which we were brought up. She actually read some *Mährchen* aloud to us, and we absolutely revelled in the enchantments of that delicious fairy-world, whose gates were thus thrown open to us. This was the beginning of a quite new sort of game, in which even poor little Otto could take part, these delightful stories being acted over and over again by us, and we grew quite inventive in devising characters for him, which he could impersonate sitting in his chair, and thus have the illusion of playing his part. It was kind Fräulein Josse too, who gave me the "Wide, Wide World," the only book in the least resembling a novel which I was allowed to read while in my teens. I was so fond of it, that I used to hide it under a chair, whence I could fetch it out and devour a few pages, in the hours when I ought, perhaps, to have been committing lines of

Horace or Ovid to memory, or writing an essay on some period of Church history.

The "Wide, Wide World" thus became, with "Augustin," the story I have already mentioned, the favourite reading of my childhood, and those two simple books were my inseparable companions all through my schooldays. My own pleasure in them had been so great, I would have liked to share it with others, and one of the very first things I did on arriving in Roumania, was to have "Augustin" translated into the language of my new country. Unfortunately, the translator's knowledge of Roumanian was insufficient, a circumstance of which I was then unable to judge, so my plan did not succeed.

During my first stay in Paris, whither Fräulein Josse had accompanied us, in 1853–54, I made the acquaintance of her best friends there, a family called Valette. My governess and Madame Valette had known one another as young girls, the latter being the daughter of the Pasteur Affiat, pastor of the French Protestant community in Hanau, so that both were delighted at thus meeting again. And now, Madame Valette's husband being pastor of the little Protestant chapel in the Marais, it became our delight, Wilhelm's and mine, to wander over there with our governess, to spend our weekly half-holiday with the Valette children. Every Thursday then, we set out on foot from our house in the Champs Elysées, for the picturesque little dwelling in the Rue Pavée, that quaint old-fashioned street, whose very name conjures up such pleasant memories for

H.M. Queen Elisabeth of Roumania

me after all these years. What happy hours we passed, playing in the beautiful garden, which our friends shared in common with several other families, whom we also learned to know. It was such a delicious new sensation to us, of freedom from all restraint and supervision, our elders always remaining together talking, leaving us children to race unmolested through house and garden, exercising our active young limbs and our sound young lungs, and clearing away the cobwebs from our tired brains. Staircase, passages, basement, how well I remember it all, and the pastor himself, whom we thought at first rather stiff, but who occasionally unbent to joke with us. And his dear good wife, who let us do just whatever came into our heads, never interfering with our wildest play, as we tore through the rooms, springing down the stairs two or three steps at a time, and hiding in dark corners, whence we could spring out and frighten one another. On cold dull days we stayed indoors, acting charades, or sitting contentedly round the big dining-room table covered with oil-cloth, telling stories in turn, laughing and chattering, so perfectly happy and at our ease in these modest surroundings, and learning more French in half-an-hour than in a whole week's lessons.

The eldest daughter, Marie, was almost grown up, but I was especially fond of her, she was the leader in all our games, and told us most delightful stories. Her next sister, Minna, was more reserved, and did not care to join in our play, but then came two, just of our own age, Cècile and Charlotte. The last-

named, who died quite young, was the sweetest little creature, and I still see her flying to meet us, with her long fair curls streaming behind her, and flinging her arms round us both in her joy to welcome us. The only son, a gentle, dreamy lad, of a serious turn of mind, afterwards became a pastor. Marie afterwards married the son of the celebrated preacher, Adolphe Monod, whose sermons were so much talked of, that it was a great disappointment to me not to be taken to hear him, but my mother would not consent to our going to church before we had attained our twelfth year.

The French Protestants gave me the impression at the time of being rather stiff and formal people, austere and almost morose in their religious views, though I really hardly know what it was made me think so, as we never heard them discuss religious matters at all. We simply came there to play, and enjoyed ourselves thoroughly, and if the gloomy appearance of the parents was sometimes in striking contrast to the high spirits of our little companions, that may of course have been due to quite other causes than a depressing creed, and I have often thought since that with the large family and very small means, there were probably material cares whose existence we did not even suspect. Of cares of that nature we knew nothing; we had others, in our own home life, of which of course we never spoke to our little friends, and they very likely used equal discretion concerning their family troubles towards us. Children who have never been encouraged to chatter, nor had the evil example of gossip before

their eyes, are naturally discreet, and very great reserve was always impressed on us by our parents.

The good custom of the weekly half-holiday, with which we became acquainted in Paris, was found to be so beneficial, sending us back refreshed and invigorated to our lessons next day, that, once introduced, it was not given up on our return to Neuwied, but became firmly established with us. The afternoon then was, however, no longer entirely devoted to play, but a part of it employed for those delightful lessons in book-binding—only another form of recreation, and perhaps, of more lasting enjoyment than the running wild, good as that was at the time.

Every Saturday I attended a class in the rue des Saints Pères, *le cours de l'Abbé Gaultier,* it was called, and to this also I walked, accompanied by Fräulein Josse. The professor, the Abbé Gaultier, sat at a green table, round which all the young girls were ranged, behind each one her mother or governess sitting, and then we were questioned on the lessons done during the week and our written work was examined, and fresh subjects given to prepare for the following week. It was rather an ordeal for me, with my invincible shyness, and accustomed as I had always been to learning alone, to have to speak out before all these strangers, and in a language that after all was not my mother-tongue. And some of the other little girls were so bright and clever, they always had something to say and turned their answers so prettily, the poor little German envied them their readiness and brilliancy, and felt quite dull and awkward in their midst. Only once

did I bear off the honours, but that was not in the least by my cleverness or presence of mind, but simply by sheer honest stupidity.

We had just been told in the grammar lesson to form a sentence in the imperfect tense, to show that we understood the right use of the imperfect. Here I was on my own ground, for I at once made a sentence bringing in *two* imperfects, and waited in burning impatience for it to be my turn to reply, feeling this time sure of my *jeton*. These "counters" or good-marks were given for every correct answer, and twenty of them made up what was called a *présidence,* twenty of which again entitled to a *brevet,* or certificate with a seal attached, the highest honour of all. I was in two classes, for certain subjects with little girls of my own age, but had been put into a higher one for history, in order that I might learn French history very thoroughly, and this it was that stood in my way, for history was my aversion and dates a stumbling-block to me—I never could remember a single one!—My failures in this field I however made up for in the grammar lesson, which was already my passion, and my lips were quivering with impatience to bring out my example of the imperfect tense. At last the Abbé Gaultier looked in my direction. "Quand j'étais petite, je ne réfléchissais pas!" The good priest came close up to me:—"Et maintenant?" I turned crimson, but blurted out quite honestly: "Maintenant je ne réfléchis pas non plus!"—The whole room burst out laughing, but the professor quietly placed one of the much-coveted red counters before me with the

words: "Tenez, mon enfant; violà dix jetons, pour votre jolie phrase et pour votre naïve réponse!" And thanks to this I really did get the brevet at last, of which I had again nearly been deprived by the unlucky history-lesson.

My painful timidity made the classes somewhat of a trial to me; I felt ill beforehand at the thought of having to answer questions in public as it were, I hated to have to play the piano before people, and as for an examination, I should never have been able to pass even a very easy one! I have been the same my whole life long, and I laughed heartily one day at the perspicacity of one of our Ministers, who after accompanying me on a visit to some school, told me with a smile, when the inspection, speech-making, and prize-giving were all happily over, that he believed there had been only one person who felt intimidated in the whole assembly, and that was myself! It was quite true; I was afraid to put any questions to the children lest they should answer wrong, and was much too anxious on their behalf, to pay any attention to what they did say. On such occasions I always remember my own troubles with those wretched chronological tables, with which my poor memory was to be burdened! And then the horrors of arithmetic! The cells, whose function it should be to deal with numbers and calculations, must be altogether lacking in my brain! Perhaps if such dreary subjects could have been taught me in verse, I might have learnt something, for it is hard for me to forget any little tag of verse I have ever heard,

and I remember every one of those that formed a summary of the chapters in our first simple little books of history. If only they had thought of teaching me dates in rhyme, I should not be so shockingly ignorant as I have remained to this day!

It was I suppose, because of my intense love of poetry, and that I felt so perfectly in my native element there, that my shyness always left me directly I had to read aloud or recite. I felt sure of myself then, and threw myself with passion into the verses I declaimed. We learned long poems by heart, "The Prisoner of Chillon," Schiller's "Lay of the Bell," whatever we liked, and in whatever language we preferred, and recited them every Sunday to our parents, to our own great delight. My mother declaimed so admirably herself, that she was by no means easy to please, she insisted on good elocution, and showed us how by modulation of the voice to give the right expression to the words. We were all apt pupils, I fancy; what delicious drollery poor little Otto put into Bürger's poem, "Emperor and Abbot," when he was only five years old!

For all my shyness I had, before we left Paris, grown quite reconciled to the lessons in a big class, feeling how much more easily one learns together with companions of one's own age, even if the incentive of rivalry, perhaps too active with some of these, played a very small part in my own case. This little taste of school-life made my lonely lessons seem so dull to me afterwards, that I was always longing to have a peep at a real school, not

this time a fashionable *cours,* like that I had attended in Paris, but a simple village school, full of little peasant children. So one morning I actually managed to steal out of the house unseen, and running away as hard as I could, I joined the children from the home-farm on their way to school. Oh! how I enjoyed myself! I sat on the bench between the farmer's little boy and girl, and joined in the singing with the whole strength of my lungs, though the small girl kept trying to put her hand before my mouth, for she thought it highly improper that a princess should be singing with peasant children! It was a glorious day; but the most glorious day must come to an end, and this one ended sadly for me, for when I was missed, my parents were frightened to death, and the hue and cry was raised, and servants and game-keepers sent out in all directions, till at last I was found, seated in triumph in the midst of the village school, and putting my whole heart and soul into the singing! I was shut up in my room for the rest of the day, as a punishment for the alarm I had given, and I was in such disgrace for some time afterwards, that I was terribly ashamed of my escapade, and hardly liked to think of it any more, much less to plan another; but now, when I look back, it is a satisfaction to me that for once in my childhood I did break through my fetters and emancipate myself so thoroughly!

That was the year after our return from Paris. The next year, Marie Valette came on a visit to us, and we spent many pleasant hours together, reading

and working. I was very busy at needlework just then, principally plain sewing, for our hospital, and very proud I was at my contribution, all of useful things I had made myself, underclothing for the poor people, which I was able to take them. While Marie and I sat at work, Fräulein Jose read aloud to us, and that somewhat recalled the pleasant days in Paris, when we met at her parents' house, and all sat round the big table, while one of the party told or read a story to the rest. And these simple pleasures of my youth are still those I prefer—beautiful needlework with agreeable conversation, or a good book read aloud, in a sympathetic circle. I am still very fond of reading aloud myself, and can do that to a very large audience. It is perhaps the only time when I quite forget my shyness!

But I did forget it as a child too, at times, and above all in the society of good, kind, simple people like the Valettes, who just left us to ourselves, to amuse ourselves in our own way. For that reason, it would have been ungrateful indeed, if I had not given a corner among my Penates to Marie and her family. The whole remembrance is a pleasant one, beginning with the long walk through the streets of Paris, which we learned to know so well, we could almost have found our way through them blindfold. And the merry party round the dinner-table, for we dined there, and only returned home quite late in the evening. Our garden was too small for the other children to come to play in it with us, and then it would have disturbed the invalids, who had, of

course, to be considered first. Both for the sake of the sick people, and of my father's work, it was no place for noisy games and joyous laughter; we had to creep about like little mice, and it was indeed a relief to us to get away, to escape into a fresher atmosphere, and shake off all the sadness that oppressed our young souls. To have been aided to this was an inestimable boon, and I still think with affection and gratitude of those, to whom we owed those happy hours.

CHAPTER XII

KARL SOHN, THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER

If ever a face on this earth may be said to have been irradiated and illumined by the light of genuine kindliness—of the pure goodness of heart that transcends all other human qualities—it was the countenance of our beloved friend, Karl Sohn, the Düsseldorf artist. His features were not regular, but were refined and spiritualised by the beauty of the soul that shone through, the gentleness of his physiognomy being only enhanced by the commanding character of the lofty, well-chiselled brow, shaded as this was by soft masses of thick fair hair. He was tall of stature, well proportioned and of dignified bearing, his step light and easy, in spite of his great height, and with something almost willowy in his gait; every movement was impregnated with grace and harmony. There was a peculiar charm in his conversation, and this may probably have been in great measure due to the soft deep tones of his finely modulated voice, as clear and caressing as the sound of a silver bell, wrapt in velvet. But much of the fascination doubtless lay in the graceful and appropriate gestures with which he accompanied his words, and which lent singular force to his graphic descriptions. Thus, in expatiating on the beauties of some landscape, words and action seemed to go together to call it up before our eyes, one broad sweep of his well-shaped hand mak-

ing the undulating line of the distant mountain-range visible to everyone.

What a pleasure it was to listen to that mellow voice, and to the low laugh with which he sometimes interrupted his own stories. Sohn was one of those exceptional, happily constituted beings, themselves so perfectly harmonious, that their presence seems to diffuse an atmosphere of peace and contentment, into which as each one enters he feels on better terms with himself and others. The world was full of beauty for him, as it is for few of us, and the joy he felt in every aspect of the beautiful—in Nature, in children, in the human form divine, and in pleasant companionship—was, like the whole nature of the man, at once ingenuous and profound. He had laid out for himself a little garden round his house in Düsseldorf, with so much skill, that the small space really looked like a miniature park. The effect was charming; but the proprietor seemed almost to find it necessary to apologise for such a display of luxury, saying deprecatingly,—"The beautiful is a necessary condition of existence to us poor artists! So indispensable is it to us, that we would willingly make every other sacrifice, just to be able to surround ourselves with things of beauty!"

It was through his pupil, my great-uncle Charles, that we first became acquainted with Sohn. My uncle, who had been a musical dilettante for the first fifty years of his life, attaining I believe a certain proficiency on the French horn, had recently turned his attention to painting, in which art he was still

a mere tyro at the time of my parents' marriage. At first he was always sending for Sohn, to ask his criticism and advice, and by sheer hard work and perseverance he succeeded in the end in painting very good portraits. There was one of my mother, for which she declared she sat to him no less than seventy-five times. To beguile the tedium of those long sittings, she learned by heart the parts she was going to play in private theatricals, repeating the lines aloud without fear of disturbing the artist, who was quite absorbed in his work, and very hard of hearing into the bargain. But in the one play occurred a phrase so singularly appropriate, that she could not resist raising her voice for it to reach the ears of the deaf old man, who peeped out astonished from behind his easel and shook his finger at her, as she exclaimed:—"Dear Uncle! must I then really be bored to death!" And her subsequent assurance that this was only in her part only half mollified him. In spite of the long sittings, the portrait was not a success; it however brought Sohn to our house, and two admirable pictures of my mother by him represent her in all her youthful bloom at that period. The one is in a red velvet dress, her face framed in a mass of fair curls; the other in her riding-habit, just as he had seen her jump down from her horse, flushed with the exercise of a long ride.

These were the first two pictures Sohn painted in our family, but he was henceforth every year a welcome visitor, often making a stay of many weeks among us, and painting more than one portrait of

each member of the family. He was inspired to his finest work, one of his many portraits of my mother —by seeing her in the ecstatic trance. So deeply had this impressed him, that it was almost under similar conditions that he worked, altogether removed from this earthly plane, blind and deaf to all that went on around him, and entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the radiant, transfigured countenance of his model, and in the feverish effort to transfer to his canvas some faint reflection of the wondrous radiance diffused over her whole person. In his despair of obtaining this effect from the ordinary resources of his palette, he was forever seeking some new means, devising some new combination of colour, he would fain have dipped his brush in pure light, have steeped the whole picture in unclouded sunshine! Something of this has been felt by all those who have striven, with like fidelity and with the same gross materials, to copy the dazzling hues even of some simple flower; has one but tried, with such poor pigments, with our muddy bismuths and dingy ochres, to reproduce the lily's transparent whiteness or the rich gold of the humble buttercup, we can the better appreciate the vanity of all attempts at imitating on so feeble and limited a scale, the radiant tints and subtle, endless gradations of Nature's colour-box, employed by the Divine Artist! We must needs perforce, for lack of the clear strong light, throw up our dim half-lights and faded colours by deeper shadows. But Sohn for this once would none of such artifice. Disdaining every expedient of contrast, he laid on the

colours simply and boldly, after the manner of the Early Masters, painting with the pious enthusiasm, the sacred fire that was theirs, and borrowing something of their technical methods to impart the expression of holy rapture to the face, a diaphanous delicacy to the folded hands, to give to the kneeling figure the semblance of a martyr at the stake, a saint to whose beatific vision the gates of Heaven are flung open wide!

Sohn made a picture of my brother Wilhelm and myself, at four and five years of age, hand in hand; such a speaking likeness, that as we stood beside it holding a big wreath of flowers, when it was given to my father on his birthday, he kept looking from the painting to us, and then back again to the picture—quite puzzled for a moment, he assured us, as to which were the real children and which their portrait! Such restless beings as small children can never be very easy to paint; but Sohn succeeded wonderfully in catching the expression on each little face,—my brother's serious and dreamy, with an almost stolid determination to keep quiet, and mine, all life and movement, with sparkling eyes and a dancing smile, that betokened anything but the requisite immobility of *pose*. It was an amusing contrast; Wilhelm stood firm as a rock, whilst all my efforts to keep still as I was bidden only made me tremble from head to foot with impatience, and at one sitting resulted in my fainting away after I had actually accomplished the feat of keeping in the same position for five consecutive minutes! I remember how alarmed the artist was, when I sud-

denly fell from my chair to the floor, in a dead faint, and how concerned he was about me, reproaching himself with the unnatural constraint imposed on my mercurial nature by the sittings. But what surprised him most of all, was to witness the means employed to bring me round; as I recovered consciousness, a sip of cold water, a little piece of black bread were given me by my mother to revive me, and Sohn, who was not then so well acquainted with the Spartan simplicity of our bringing up, felt amazed, as he afterwards told us, at the homeliness of the measures. Little princesses, he thought, were always fed on dainties, and would not condescend to eat anything less appetising than cake!

The torture those sittings were to me, I hope he never knew. He was so good and kind, and did so much to make them bearable, whiling away the time by talking to us and telling us amusing stories, or getting someone else to read an entertaining book aloud to us while he painted. But it was all no good. Outside I could see the sun shining, and hear the birds singing and the wind whistling through the trees, and I—who longed to be out there in the sunshine, singing with the birds, and running races with the wind,—I must be cooped up within four walls, in a room that instead of the fragrance of the flowers, smelt of nasty oil-colours! It was not to be borne. As well try to imprison the wild west wind, or stop the dancing mountain-stream in its course! I was just as wild and free, and my mother sometimes asked if any power on earth could be found to tame me. Had she but known! All too soon a spell

would be worked, transforming the wayward child into a quiet gentle maiden, grave-eyed and serious. It was by the discipline of sorrow that the change should be wrought—in the sick-room that the lesson must be learnt; there I could sit for hours, silent and motionless, dreading lest a movement, a whisper should disturb the dear sufferer beside whose pillow I watched.

But already then, in my wildest, most reckless mood, and however my spirit might chafe at the enforced immobility of the lengthy sittings, I felt the soothing influence of the artist's gentle voice, and the deep full tones could lull my feverish impatience. Nor did the impression wear off as time went on; echoes of that sympathetic voice live in my memory, calling up many a bygone scene—long talks as we rambled through the forest, dreams and aspirations, hopes and fears, all the joys and sorrows of those vanished days,—Sohn's memory is inseparably associated with all of these. The portraits he painted extend over a long series of years. One of Otto was done just before the poor boy's death—my father's also, at a time when we knew that he had not long to live among us—my mother he depicted at all times and seasons, and under all possible circumstances, from ecstasy to the deepest mourning. He used to say, that he hoped to live long enough to make one more portrait of her with snow-white hair. But this wish remained unfulfilled, for my mother's hair had not yet turned grey, when he was called away from us.

One autumn Sohn came to us accompanied by his

friend, the great artist, Lessing. The latter, a very handsome man, like so many of the followers of Art, was extremely taciturn. He was a good sportsman, shooting his deer almost daily. Much as I dislike all sport, my admiration of the artist induced me to bring him the proverbial good luck, by meeting him as if by chance when he set out in the early morn with his gun. As I passed with a smiling though silent greeting, I thought to myself that had he but known my horror of the slaughter of innocent dumb creatures, the great painter would have been still more flattered by this attention on the part of the daughter of the house. This was after Otto's death, and Lessing made a sketch of the grave for my mother, with the wonderful precision in rendering every detail that characterised him. Every branch of the trees overshadowing the tomb was portrayed with lifelike fidelity; Lessing's scrupulous exactitude refusing to sanction the slightest deviation from the original. Every bough, every twig must be in its place; even in a landscape his veracity would not tolerate any suppression or addition. His realism, his close copying of Nature, was coupled with a fear of accepting any other teacher; and he had always been afraid to visit Italy, lest he should sacrifice something of his own originality to the involuntary imitation of the Old Masters.

When I grew up, Sohn wished to make a portrait of me, as he often saw me, sitting in the shadow of a tree, a straw hat on my head, in my simple morning attire. But it was unfortunately quite another picture that was wanted—in evening dress, in the draw-

ing-room—just something that I hated, and that seemed to me so little like myself. Sohn, who had known me from a child, understood this, and his idea was the true one. I shall always regret that picture that never was painted, it would have shown me exactly as I was, at that period of my life. I was the child of the forest, the forest-song, and have never wished to be aught else. The untamed and untamable in my nature, from which some good folk shrank in alarm, was just what pleased our kind artist-friend. Others might find my high spirits fatiguing, they were never so to him. My spontaneity, my frankness, refreshed him, and his heart melted towards this poor little child of Nature, who was to be forced against her will to become conventional—and even, without her knowing it, was being already educated to fit her for a throne! Anything rather than that, I should have said—for choice, a cottage, a little house hidden away in a wood—for I was not ambitious, at least my ambition took quite another direction. What could all worldly pomp mean to me, who had revelled in the forest-splendours, in the glories of Nature! The beeches of our lofty avenues would dwarf the finest columns ever reared to support a roof, and how poor and insignificant the hubbub of the crowd must sound, to ears accustomed to the mighty music of the storm-wind, making the tall trees bend and quiver in its path! In all this Sohn was of my way of thinking, and he had quick perceptions of the quieter beauties of Nature too, and never missed pointing out to me a single blossom sprouting, or an effect of sunlight

through the intertwining branches. And he led me on to talk and pour out my confidences to him, and often broke into a hearty laugh at some unexpected sally. I was well willing, I told him, to devote myself to the service of my fellow-creatures, but not from a throne; I would live in their midst, to tend and comfort them. And the thought of marriage was hateful to me, for a husband, it seemed to me, must be a master, a sort of tyrant, but children I loved, and wished that I might have a dozen!

How heartily Sohn would laugh at all this, and then grow serious again, and crown my hair with glow-worms, as we strolled home through the twilight. I sang like the birds in those days, in the truest sense of the word, for every verse I made I sang to myself, in the joy of my heart. My life was full of poetry indeed—of poetry fostered by the surroundings. I have always thought that the happiest lot on earth is that of the mediatised princes. They are like little kings, but without the cares of government, enjoying the same liberty as people in private life, yet with a patriarchal interest in the weal and woe of all their people. Such happy mortals are generally beloved from their birth, their fortune suffices for their needs without awakening envy in others, and they have opportunities for indulging intellectual and artistic tastes, such as few others possess. Their country seat is generally some old castle, to which historic memories attach, probably with a fine library or picture gallery, and archeological treasures perhaps beneath the soil. As patrons of Art, as hosts to a company of well-

chosen guests, as friends of scholars and men of letters, as descendants of forefathers renowned for talents and virtues, they are privileged beyond all others. And friends like Sohn must be counted among their best treasures!

A portrait-painter, worthy of the name, must generally be a good psychologist, for he must study his models well, and learn their character through the physiognomy.

I shall never forget a day Sohn spent with us at Altwied, the lovely old ruined castle, which was the cradle of our family. It stands shut in by high hills on a little peninsula formed by the meanderings of the Wiedbach, the mountain stream. Many a dream have I dreamt within those crumbling walls, of which much more was standing then, but on the day in question we came, I know not how, to speak of the opera, "la Dame Blanche," and as we all lay stretched on the grass, Sohn related the story. So poetically, so touchingly did he tell of the young man's return to the castle of his ancestors, and of the long-forgotten song that stirs in his memory as he crosses the threshold—I was carried away by it, and the actual performance of the opera, which I witnessed some years later, fell very flat in comparison. The glare of the foot-lights, the painted scenery, the stiffness of the acting, destroyed the beauty of the story as first revealed to me through the medium of an artist's soul, and on the picturesque site to which it seemed naturally to belong.

CHAPTER XIII

WEIZCHEN

In former days nurses and waiting-women in the princely families were themselves gentlewomen. It was rightly deemed all-essential for children, only to come in contact with people of good breeding, that they might never incur the danger of acquiring bad manners. It was thus that the sister of General Weiz, a young and accomplished woman, became my mother's nurse soon after my grandmother's death, and stayed on in charge of the younger children for many years after my grandfather's second marriage. Later on, when these also were growing up, Fräulein Weiz accompanied my mother to Neuwied, where she remained as housekeeper for many years, and where we all grew much attached to her.

Weizchen, as she was always affectionately called in both families, was young and very pretty when she entered the ducal household, blest moreover with a very fine voice, which my grandmother had had carefully cultivated, but which its possessor had never felt the slightest wish to display on the stage or in the concert-room, contenting herself with the pleasure her talent was able to bestow in a smaller circle. She soon made herself beloved in her post in Biebric, but just at first my mother was simply inconsolable at the parting with her dear old *bonne,* Mlle. Clausel, by whom she had been petted and

made much of since her birth, and from whom she had just been separated. Weizchen's beautiful voice had therefore for the moment no charm for the little girl, although it excited such general admiration, as would also at the present day the singer's magnificent red hair, that set off the dazzling whiteness of her skin, but which was then looked upon with such disfavour, that she was quite glad to hide it under a light sprinkling of powder, according to prevailing etiquette, whenever she appeared in low dress, with the children, in the drawing-room.

As far back as my recollections go, Weizchen was always an inmate of my paternal home, having very soon followed my mother there after the latter's marriage. From the very first my mother was accompanied by Louise von Preen, as lady-in-waiting, and very amusing tales were told afterwards of the home-sickness of the two young things—barely eighteen years of age either of them—in their new surroundings. When my mother in a moment of loneliness rushed to Louise's room for comfort, she found the poor girl seated among her boxes, which she had not yet had the heart to have unpacked, crying her eyes out. They sobbed together, sighing as they gazed at the distant hills, beyond which lay their old home. And yet that home was not in reality so very far away, and at the present day could easily be reached in a couple of hours, though to their romantic feelings they seemed to be pining for it in distant exile! Very soon, however, the young bride was cheered by a visit from her brothers, and after that gay days began for Neu-

wied, the castle often resounding with the happy voices and ringing laughter of the merry young people assembled within its walls.

But it was from Weizchen that we loved to hear anecdotes of my mother's childhood. When she was only three years old her life was saddened by the loss of the little brother, just a year older than herself, who had been her constant companion. During his illness it was the poor little boy's one delight to make his sister dance to the accompaniment of a toy harmonica he played, propped up among the pillows in his bed, and Weizchen said it was the prettiest sight to see the little girl, whose movements had already all the lightness and natural grace which afterwards earned for her the sobriquet of the Rhineland Fairy at the court of Berlin, dancing away indefatigably for the pleasure of the poor sick child, whose eyes wore a most pathetic expression as they watched her. Sad and lonely the little girl was, when the brother had gone. The lives of little princes were indeed lonely enough at the best of times in those days, for once out of the nursery they saw but little of one another, not even having their meals in common, but each child brought up quite apart from the rest with a special tutor or governess, with whom the repasts were taken, *tête-à-tête,* and to whose tender mercies the pupil was somewhat ruthlessly abandoned. In my own early childhood we still experienced the inconveniences of this system of education, but the transition to more rational and humane treatment of the young was already taking place, and children even

of the highest rank now-a-days lead happy natural lives, associating with others of their age and constantly seeing their parents, of whom they no longer stand in dread. Quite early we came to table with our parents, but that was very uncommon, and in an older generation still would have been thought impossible. Of course in very many cases the instruction children received suffered from the lack of supervision, and some of these young people grew up deplorably ignorant, notwithstanding very fair natural abilities. My highly gifted uncle Maurice, for instance—artist, musician, and adept at surgery—capable it seemed of learning anything to which he turned his attention, was yet never able to pen the shortest note without making some mistake in spelling. But he painted and composed, as a mere dilettante it is true, but with very decided talent, and with the same grace and brilliancy that he brought into everything else, whether losing his money to his male friends at cards, or creating havoc among female hearts at the Viennese Court, whither he had been sent at the age of seventeen, and where he soon showed himself proficient in the various accomplishments supposed to be befitting a young man of his rank, very handsome and well-endowed with worldly goods. He was my mother's idol, and made the little sister his confidant—even of his love affairs—at a very early age! Very early indeed he had begun practising his seductive arts on the other sex, if it be true that at the age of ten, seeing one of his mother's young maids-of-honour in tears, he sidled up to her in his most caress-

ing, most coaxing way, looking up in her face with all the melting tenderness of which his big blue eyes were capable, and murmuring persuasively:—"Do not cry, Louise; you know I shall always be your friend!"

But it was a little later, when the gay handsome youth had really begun to turn female heads, that his confidences to the younger sister must often have assumed a very amusing character. Fräulein Lavater once found her little pupil dissolved in tears, and it was only after reiterated promises of secrecy on the part of the governess, that the child at last sobbed out:—"Maurice is in love—in love! And she whom he loves can never be his, for she is a married woman!" That Fräulein Lavater had some difficulty in restraining her laughter, may be easily imagined; but she succeeded, and had moreover the good sense and good feeling to respect her promise and keep the story of this comic episode to herself, until a time when its being made known could no longer be prejudicial to anyone. She was rewarded for her discretion by being also made the recipient of some of the young man's confidences—glimpses of the innumerable adventures of which he was the hero in the gay Austrian capital.

The idolising affection my mother bestowed on her elder brother, was felt for her in turn by her younger brothers and sisters. She was never tired of playing with them and of telling them the wonderful stories which she made up for their amusement. The announcement of their step-sister's engagement and approaching marriage was received with char-

acteristic comments by these little ones. The nine-year-old Helene wept bitterly, affirming that it was utterly impossible for her to live without Marie; Nicholas, a year younger, but always practical and reasonable, consoled himself with the thought of the beautiful gardens and fine collection of stuffed animals of which his sister would become possessor by her marriage to a Prince of Wied; and little Sophie, frankly indignant, exclaimed:—"It is too bad! I will tell mamma at once, and see if she will allow such a thing!"

Those were bright and happy days that dawned on Neuwied, soon after my parents' marriage, when my mother, herself in the heyday of youth, led the revels, supported by her young brothers, the gayest of the gay. Dances, shooting-parties, amateur theatricals, followed one another in rapid succession, and the woods echoed with song and laughter of the happy light-footed young people who scampered through them from morn till night. All this has been told in a family chronicle, written and illustrated by my father himself, and carefully preserved in our archives. But the story does not go beyond the year 1847; there it suddenly breaks off. The festival was over; the lights had all burnt out; the fun and frolic had come to an end, and a great cloud of sadness seemed to descend on us and envelop everything. My mother's lameness; Uncle Maurice's death; the dangerous illness of my brother Wilhelm; all these misfortunes, occurring almost simultaneously, plunged our whole household in

gloom, and the gaiety and merry-making of those early days was never to return.

Then began, with our journey to Heidelberg attended with so much discomfort and disappointment, the long series of those pilgrimages to consult the most renowned oracles of medical science, which entirely occupied our lives during several years. The celebrated Dr. Chelius, whose advice we now sought, certainly did restore my brother to health by the treatment he prescribed, but to my mother he could do no good at all. With the illogical prejudice of childhood, I took a great dislike to the famous doctor on that account, looking upon him as a most cruelly disposed individual, who was putting my mother to great pain for his own pleasure, but an anecdote I heard of him in later years invested him with a certain interest in my eyes and made me regret my hasty judgment.

It appears that when, after a very hard struggle in his youth, Dr. Chelius had at last become celebrated, he one day received a message from King Maximilian of Bavaria, to the effect that he was the latter's son, and that the King wished to know if he could do anything for him. With proper spirit Chelius replied, that having done without a father for all these years, he thought that he could get on without one very well in future!

We spent the year '48 in Heidelberg, coming in for all the excitement of the Revolution, with which we children were vastly pleased; it amused us to see bands of men wearing red caps, and armed with scythes, go past shouting and singing, and above all

we were delighted with the exploits of the "Free Companions,"—volunteers who apparently found our garden the most convenient place for their rifle-practice. We felt no alarm, even when someone, who was just then standing close beside me, kindly helping me to arrange my doll's wig, was struck on the forehead, fortunately, as it happened, by a spent bullet, which glanced off without inflicting any real injury.

But we were warned at last that we had better leave without further delay, and the return journey was not accomplished without peril. The name of the demagogue, Hecker, was scrawled everywhere in the dust that covered our travelling-carriage, on the box of which my father, disguised as a servant, sat beside the coachman. In Mannheim the carriage was surrounded by a noisy group of men in red caps, who tore open the door, and contemptuously exclaiming:—"Nothing but women!" banged it again. When we reached Biebrich, we found the castle empty. Everyone had left in haste, and we had to go to an hotel to spend the night. This was a cold and comfortless reception indeed—no one expecting us, or even seeming to know or care who we were—in the place where a welcome as warm as it was ceremonious usually awaited us—servants lining the steps, sentries presenting arms, and the Duke, surrounded by his courtiers, advancing to meet his sister and her family. The contrast was so complete and chilling, I might well feel shocked and hurt and dazed, as if the solid ground had suddenly given way under my feet, to find myself so

small, so unimportant, so utterly unrecognised—and just in my dear Biebrich, the paradise of my childhood, where, as in Wiesbaden, I had spent my happiest days, made much of and enjoying the nearest approach to being petted and spoilt that I had ever known. This sensation of bewilderment, as of one walking in a topsy-turvy world, was carried to its height by the familiar address of the chamber-maid in the inn, whom I watched preparing our beds. Altogether I received a lesson on the insignificance of worldly honours and distinction, and perhaps even on the instability of all mundane things, more to the point in teaching me humility than any of my mother's homilies on the subject.

A great change came over our household after the year '48, whose events had swept away half our revenues, our style of living was much simplified, the little court disbanded, even some of the servants —among them my mother's first waiting-maid—dismissed, and everything reorganised on a much smaller, more modest scale. And to what purpose had been henceforth pomp and lavish expenditure, in a house in which sorrow and sickness had taken up their abode! The diminished retinue, the cessation of open-handed hospitality, those were as naught beside the weightier cares that combined to crush the gay spirits of the revellers, and in the first place, of the young châtelaine herself. The death of her beloved brother Maurice was a blow from which my mother never recovered, and the shock much accelerated the morbid symptoms that had just begun to declare themselves. Never shall

I forget the heartrending expression on her face, as bathed in tears, she made her appearance in the nursery to tell us children, that the bright, handsome, gallant Uncle Maurice was dead! So small was I at the time, that I could not help finding a little consolation in the black and black and white striped dresses made for me on this occasion—it was a change from the perpetual white! But the gloom of mourning did not pass away; my mother's health had begun to fail. I remember her listless gait, how she seemed each day to find greater difficulty in going about, holding on to every piece of furniture for support, and then how, all at once, she could no longer walk at all. It seemed doubly hard that this should be her fate, who had been the gayest of the gay, blithe as a lark and lightfooted as a gazelle, out-tiring all her partners in the dance, and outstripping every one of her young companions in their mad races through the woods, bounding up and down the hills as if she scarcely touched the ground!

Throughout those mirthful days, in their maddest pranks and most reckless fun, it was always to Weizchen that the young folk turned for help to carry out their most extravagant devices. They knew they might count on her to aid and abet them in every harmless plot, indeed her own inventive genius sometimes furnished invaluable hints, as in the memorable birthday reception prepared by my mother for Uncle Maurice, in retaliation for a practical joke he had played on her a short time before. Remembering his sister's fondness for the Nassau bonbons, a sweetmeat her father's cooks excelled in

preparing, the young man had sent her a magnificent box of these, which she handed round with delight to her guests one evening, only discovering by the wry faces or half-smothered ejaculations of disgust of those who partook of the confectionery, that the interior of these well-sugared delicacies by no means corresponded with their tempting outside! It was to punish him for this sorry trick—a little too much resembling, it must be owned, the "merrie jestes" with which Louis XI is credited—that my mother planned the following revenge. During the gala dinner being given in my uncle's honour, a servant suddenly made the announcement that the three Graces begged for a moment's audience, to present their congratulations to the Prince. Amused and smiling the young man left his seat and advanced to the door, where he was met by a trio, resembling the Three Furies, or the witches in "Macbeth"—anything rather than the vision of feminine loveliness to have been expected. Three of the most gaunt and ill-favoured washerwomen of the district had been selected by the malicious Weizchen, crowned with roses, and clad in snow-white draperies, through which their bony necks and red arms looked only the more frightful, and primed with champagne in order that they might enact their part with the greater zest, they surrounded their victim, whose short-sight prevented him from seeing them distinctly until at quite close quarters. Poor Maurice, whose susceptibility to female charms was only equalled by his aversion for every form of ugliness, promptly turned and fled; but the ladies, nothing

daunted, pursued and again drew him into their midst, executing a wild bacchanalian dance while they tried to imprison and bind fast the fugitive with the long green garlands they carried. At last, breaking away from his tormentors, and jumping over chairs and tables which he upset in his flight, the young man sank, breathless and exhausted, behind a sofa in one corner of the room, whilst at a sign from my mother, the Mænads vanished. The hero of the adventure only came forth from his hiding-place, when a few minutes later Weizchen entered the room, to ask my mother demurely if she were content with the way her orders had been executed. Then, springing to his feet, he seized Weizchen round the waist, and kissed her so heartily, that all present who were not in the secret believed that this also was a part of the masquerade.

I should never have finished if I were to try to tell of all the amusing scenes that then took place, of some of which I retain a faint recollection, while others are only known to me by hearsay. One of the beautifully illuminated pages of my father's "Chronicle of Monrepos," depicts the mock solemnities of the reception awaiting my mother and himself on one of their visits to the castle of Braunfels. The customary bevy of white-robed maidens, deputed to hand my mother a bouquet with an address of welcome, was on this occasion represented by all the elderly gentlemen present in the castle—the Prince's old bachelor uncles and their friends—who attired themselves in the traditional white muslin frocks and wreaths of roses, and with well-simulated

bashfulness recited verses in honour of the visitor.

The amateur theatricals too, what delight they gave, and how many diverting incidents sprang from these performances! One of them must find a place here. An aunt of mine, whose height would very well enable her to pass for a man, had agreed to enact a male character in some comedy, and for this she was to wear a suit of my father's clothes, stipulating, however, that neither he nor any other of the opposite sex were to know of this,—the impersonation was to remain a profound secret to the audience. But unfortunately on the evening in question, as my father sat quietly smoking with a few friends, his valet appeared, and without the slightest circumlocution, bluntly requested "the loan of the brocaded breeches, for Her Serene Highness, Princess Solms!" Inextinguishable laughter broke forth from all present, and I really doubt whether my aunt's success in the part itself, which she now threw up, would have been as great, or have provoked such hilarity.

In nearly all such episodes Weizchen was mixed up. It was to her that one turned, in every emergency, and not merely in our own household, but on both sides of the family, she came to be looked upon as a sort of institution, something belonging to us all, and firmly rooted in the past, but no less indispensable to the present. The Duchess of Oldenburg, my mother's eldest sister, never came back to the Rhineland without at once sending for Weizchen, in order to revive old memories, and live bygone scenes over again with her, who was herself a piece

of family history, the repository of so many a family secret.

It is on the lighter side of her nature that I have chiefly dwelt, on the easier duties of those happier days. But in the hour of trial, Weizchen proved herself no less true and devoted, standing firmly at her post, as unwearied in her nursing, in her care and attendance on my mother, as she had formerly been in contributing to every scheme of amusement. All her best qualities were shown during those years of sorrow, and it was perhaps the large share of the burden which she took upon her own shoulders, by which she was herself prematurely aged and saddened. She lived with us till I was about fourteen, and then retired with a pension to rooms assigned her in grandmamma's pretty house. Her memory is bound up with some of the happiest recollections of my childhood, and still at times I fancy I hear her voice ring out in one or other of the dear old melodies—the plaintive ballad of "Emma and Eginhard," or Mozart's graceful "Lullaby," which she sang so often to us in the bygone days, in the old home by the Rhine.

CHAPTER XIV

A GROUP OF HUMBLE FRIENDS

Of these there are so many—kind honest hearts, whose worth I learnt to recognise in bygone days, and whom it would be impossible for me to leave unnoticed here. I cannot name them all, but all are in my thoughts, as I select just a few from their number to inscribe among my Penates.

The one I would mention first, the truly excellent women who when Weizchen retired undertook the management of our household, was with us through those especially trying years in which my parents' ill-health and poor Otto's constant sufferings made the interior of our house more resemble that of a hospital than of an ordinary home. Frau Baring was a gentle-voiced, mild-eyed woman past middle-age, who had herself experienced much sorrow, and this very fact made her more fitted for the surroundings than a younger, livelier person would have proved. Not that there was anything morose or depressing about our new housekeeper, of whom I happened to see a good deal, it being my mother's wish now that my more serious studies were finished, that I should gain some practical knowledge of the matters under her control. So I was duly initiated into some of the mysteries of her domain, watching her at her work of superintending, and giving orders, learning the art of book-keeping and even making an occasional inspection with her of larders,

pantry and linen-closet. As for the results achieved, I cannot look back on these with very great satisfaction, as all such commonplace details of daily life seemed to me scarcely worth the time and trouble bestowed on them, and I by no means relished being called upon to waste any thought on such dry and prosaic matters. Entering the daily or weekly expenditure in an account-book appeared to me the most cruel trial of human patience that could possibly have been devised, but the very horror with which the sight of these dreary ledgers inspired me, did but increase my admiration and respect for all those whose duty compels them to pass their days in the contemplation of dull columns of meaningless figures! In my personal distaste for all the petty details pertaining to the direction of a household, I was therefore but the more disposed to feel sympathy for good Frau Baring, and indeed for all her myrmidons, having often had occasion to observe the conscientious zeal with which all of these, every maid-servant and laundress down to the meanest scullion, performed the duties laid on them. So many instances have I known of these humblest functions patiently and punctiliously discharged, that I for one can never join in the complaints too often raised against the servant-class. Every service rendered us seemed always to be a labour of love, and this experience can surely not have been confined to ourselves alone.

I have often thought that I perhaps owed my magnificent health in a certain measure to my nurse, the simple peasant-woman picked out for her own

H.M. Queen Elisabeth of Roumania

fine *physique* and sound constitution to be my foster-mother. In any case it must have been from her that I derived my simple tastes in matters gastronomic, and this has doubtless much contributed to my well-being my whole life long. As a young girl I exulted frankly in my health and strength, nor was I in the least ashamed of my rosy cheeks and plumpness, the pallid and enervated type of woman not being then proposed as a model, and no one having the slightest desire to look like a ghost. But I thought little enough of such matters—I was better employed, with my books, my work, my music, and whenever our own dear invalids did not demand my special care, in paying visits to the sick people on our estates.

A dull sad existence, some might say, for a growing girl, but it had its joys, and deeper and holier ones than can ever spring from the mere quest of happiness. Moments of depression and discouragement at times were mine, for who is there has not known such, but the natural buoyancy of youth prevailed, and already in the exercise of my pen, I had a source of comfort ever at hand.

And certainly the example of the good faithful souls around me, of their untiring devotion, contributed not a little to nerve and strengthen me whenever my own courage seemed like to fail. How weak and faint-hearted must I account myself, when I looked in Frau Baring's face, to read there the tale of bygone suffering—of struggles valiantly fought out, despair triumphantly lived down. Little by little I won her confidence, and she told me the

story of her life—of the grim fight sustained with direst poverty, since the day when her husband, a government under-official, had lost his post through ill-health, and the task of providing for him as well as for their child had devolved on her alone. She could speak quite calmly of her bereavement, could take comfort in the thought that the husband and daughter she had loved so dearly and tended so well, were both at rest at last, and could suffer no more, but when she told of the privations they had endured, her lips quivered uncontrollably, and the tears trickled down her faded cheeks. No sermon preached me on the duty of resignation could have been half as effective as this living testimony to the severity of the hardships borne thus uncomplainingly. And this woman, herself so sorely tried, was full of sympathy for the troubles that pressed so heavily on my young life. Of these we never spoke, but I saw that she understood, and felt for me, and the knowledge made my burden lighter.

For several years we lived as if on an island, shut off from the rest of the world, and out of reach of even most intimate friends. It was better so. There seemed to be no leisure then for the pleasures of social intercourse. They only who themselves were suffering or in need of help, were encouraged to draw near. Besides the serious view of life which solitude thus engendered in us, it had another salutary effect, in preventing any comparison between our lot and that of others, in keeping far from us the faintest suspicion that there was aught unusual in our existence. From our parents' example, as

well as from their precepts, we learned a lesson of deep import, that of the absolute subordination of bodily to spiritual needs—we were taught to regard our bodies as mere servants and ministers to the nobler half of our nature, and to treat any mere physical suffering or inconvenience as a matter of but small moment. Any of the little ailments or accidents which weaker parents are inclined to bemoan as real misfortunes to their offspring, were put on one side by my mother as wholly unworthy of attention, with the remark that such things might happen to anyone, that few people had not something more to complain of! Her own fear was of being betrayed into any weakness, and I still remember the tone in which she murmured—"I must not give way!" when in watching by her side the protracted agony of poor Otto's death-struggle, I had given vent to a cry of anguish and despair. So I learnt from her to smother my feelings, and I told myself how thankful I ought to be, in being blest with parents so exceptionally endowed, that I could but look up to them with reverence, and strive to follow in their steps.

Another lesson in contentment was constantly given us by our humble friends, by the poor folk round about, whom from my earliest years I was allowed to visit. One dear old woman I have spoken of elsewhere; the little sketch I entitled "German Happiness" is but a reproduction of a conversation held with her, for I felt that no better specimen could be given of that peculiar form of contentment with one's lot in life that is typical of the

German people. "Hans in Luck" is perhaps the truest piece of folk-lore that exists—the earliest form in which we find the national characteristic depicted. All happiness, it is well known, lies in ourselves, and to the cheerful temperament I speak of, it is to be found everywhere. In every misfortune such people as my dear old peasant-woman can see some cause for thankfulness; instead of shedding tears over a broken arm they rejoice in the one left sound, and comfort themselves in the direst straits by the thought that things might have been much worse still! The charm of my old friend's simple words, so faithfully reproduced by me on a former occasion, lies chiefly in the raciness of the Rhenish dialect, and would not lend itself to translation. But I am glad to think that her last moments were brightened by the flowers I sent her, for faithful to the promise I had once given, I took care that these should surround her before she breathed her last, as an earnest that on the coffin and grave they should not be lacking. There were many others, men and women alike, in whom the habit of making the best of things had become a second nature, and the uncomplaining, even cheerful simplicity with which their load of misery was borne, can surely be accounted little less than heroic.

Much suffering was always caused by the inundations, which in certain years spread havoc throughout the whole region. Boats were sent out to carry food from house to house, and I remember going in one of these with Baron Bibra, steward of the domain, and one of our oldest friends, and

others of the gentlemen composing our little court, to assist in distributing coffee, bread, and soup, to the poor people in their flooded habitations. In one of these about forty human beings were crowded together in two tiny rooms in which they had taken refuge, and in their midst a corpse—for the churchyard was under water also, like the bakers' shops and everything else. It was a terrible sight. And another year, somewhat later, much damage was done by a hurricane of exceptional violence that broke out at the same moment, devastating the beautiful park behind the castle. There was one avenue of magnificent linden-trees, which was almost entirely swept away during that terrible night, hardly one out of the scores of fine old trees of many hundred years' growth being left standing next morning. For the moment my brother was too much occupied in bringing help to his poorer neighbours, many of whose lives were saved by his personal exertions, to have time to mourn the loss of his trees, but afterwards it was a grief to all of us to behold the destruction of our beloved park. An enormous quantity of wood, about eight thousand cubic feet in measurement, was carted away from the wreckage. I wept for my dear old trees. They had been planted by our forefathers in centuries gone by, and had looked on at the good and evil fortunes of our family for all those years. To me they were especially dear. They had been the confidants of my inmost thoughts. How often have I leant out from my window and talked to them! There was one white poplar to which I told all my

secrets, and I listened to its murmured replies, as its leaves rustled, gently stirred by the night breeze that came sighing across the rippling Rhine.

That was before the great storm, the one I have just told of, in the year 1876. But long before that, in my childhood and early youth, I had witnessed some only less terrible. The position of Neuwied exposed us to the full force of every gale that swept up the Rhine, each gust of wind being caught as it were in the bend of the river wherein the little town lies, and eddying round and round the castle with pitiless rage, seemed in a trap from which it sought to break away. With the howling of the wind, and the crashing sound of the tiles torn off the roof, we could often scarce hear ourselves speak in the rooms inside, and very often too it was hardly possible to open the doors, so great was the draught. On the river itself, with its waves lashed to fury, the spectacle was one of mingled terror and grandeur. And I was well situated to have a full view of it on each such occasion, my windows directly overlooking the Rhine. I used to watch the boats and rafts, could see them distinctly and hear the rowers sing out, as they dipped their oars in cadence. Those big rafts were most picturesque, and there was something poetic, in harmony with the scene, in the cry of the rowers:—"Hesseland, France!" instead of right and left. "Hesseland, France!"—the sound still rings in my ears.

But one day the wind was wilder than its wont, the sky was murky, the Rhine chocolate-brown, with breakers like the sea, and the rain beat against our

window-panes, down which it then streamed in torrents. Suddenly a fearful shriek went up from the river, and looking out I saw a very big raft going to pieces, having been dashed against the landing-stage. The crew shouted for help, as one by one they were washed off their planks and swallowed up by the waves, and boat after boat put off to their assistance, succeeding in rescuing many of their number. But some must have been drowned before my eyes. And I was alone to see it, for mine were the only rooms that looked out that way, and the whole terrible little drama took place so quickly, I had no time to summon anyone.

My beloved Rhine did not, however, always appear under this tragic aspect, nor are all my memories of the old home steeped in such melancholy hues. How beautiful it was, and the grounds how lovely in those old days, before the cyclone had laid low the tallest trees. Some of the finest specimens were quite near the house, and towered above it, white poplars whose silvery foliage contrasted strikingly with the ruddy hue of the copper-beeches, and the soft delicate verdure of the lindens. The world looked lovely and smiling indeed, as I gazed from my window and saw them bathed in sunshine, with the shadows of their waving branches dancing backwards and forwards on the grass. But there were other seasons;—sometimes of long duration,—when the gloom within doors was so great, it seemed as if the sun never shone at all, and I sat alone in my room over my books, listening to the roaring of the wind in the chimney, roaring as it only roars in old and half

empty houses, as if the Spirit of the Storm were imprisoned there! Something of this Paganini must surely have one day heard and have borne in mind when he composed those strange, weird variations for the violin, in which the strings sob and moan with more than mortal anguish. Quite recently, when that melody was played before me by our gifted young musician, George Enesco, so vividly did it recall the wailing sound, as of a soul in distress, by which my childhood had been haunted, that I leant over to my young niece, who happened to be present, and whispered, "Do you hear the voice of the wind in the chimneys of the old home?"—and she burst into tears. Ah! how often have I cried too in the old days, when that dismal sound rang in my ears, and all that I looked out upon was a sullen swollen flood carrying along huge blocks of ice, or else tossing its angry foaming waves aloft, beneath a sky that seemed itself weighted with lead and borne down to the earth, unmindful of its true mission to stand arched above our heads to cheer us! And I had no amusing books to distract my thoughts; nothing but grammars and histories! And the latter I abhorred, for they seemed to me to be but a record of human misery on a larger scale, of which I had only seen too much in my own small way, quite at close quarters. I did not want to hear of the wretched squabbles that had gone on all over the earth, of how men hated and vilified one another, how they quarrelled and fought. History is nothing but glorified misery after all! I knew of course that these were frightful heresies, and was very

much ashamed of my own deficient powers of admiration, but it was perhaps not very much to be wondered at, considering the way in which historic facts had been rammed down my throat in my lesson-hours. It was natural enough that my thoughts should wander in any other direction, and that I should seize my pen, and try to give them form. These first products of my Muse were surely very poor stuff, but at least I had the good sense to consign the whole of my early verses to the flames. The same fate befell—a little later on—my first dramatic venture, a long play with six-and-twenty characters, and a highly sensational plot, involving murder and madness, arson and similar attractions. I did not destroy this at once, but coming across it a few years later, I enjoyed a good laugh over it, before I burnt it.

I must not forget to mention our town musicians, an institution that was a relic of olden times. Many of these had been in service in the castle, where, as in many another of the smaller German courts, they had formed a most excellent orchestra, trained under their master's orders. Such an orchestra, composed entirely of servants,—footmen, lackeys, valets, grooms,—existed still when my father married, and both he and his young wife often played quartets and quintets with their own domestics. The service may perhaps sometimes have suffered a little in consequence; it has happened that the flute-player, standing behind my mother's chair, would begin humming his part, forgetting

that he was waiting at table. But if the waiting was indifferent, the music, on the other hand, was very good! After the year 1848, when our whole establishment was so reduced, several of these old servants established themselves as musicians in the town, and not only my brother and I, but his children since, took lessons from some of them.

Connected with our hospital in Neuwied were a number of worthy, kind-hearted people—mostly ladies belonging to the town, who were themselves busy enough in their own households, but who yet found time to work for the poor, and to visit the families in greatest distress. And of all those charitable souls Frau Hachenberg, for nearly forty years president of the Ladies Nursing Union, was the most active and zealous. She was the very essence of Christian charity, and withal of such strong commonsense and so practical in all her methods, that every undertaking flourished in her hands. It was she who founded the hospital with but a thaler to commence building. Her confidence never wavered; she knew the funds would be forthcoming. And the faith and trust which were hers she managed to impart to others in turn; so that her work has continued growing, and has increased to three times its original size. The good deaconesses of Kaiserswerth have been attached to the hospital from the first, and to them also a large share of honour is due.

Immense capability of self-sacrifice must be theirs who would devote themselves to the service of suf-

fering humanity. In Frau Hachenberg the spirit of self-sacrifice knew no bounds. And her talent for organisation was on the same scale. She was no sentimentalist, nor in the least given to the use of pious phraseology. Quiet, determined, straightforward, her simplicity and directness were more improving than the elegant manners of many a more fashionable woman, who would indeed have been at a loss to control the heterogeneous elements which Frau Hachenberg dealt with so skilfully. With a single glance she seemed to survey a whole situation, and grasp all its contingencies. I could never cease admiring her, and it was from her I learnt nearly all that in my youth I knew respecting the management of benevolent institutions. So strongly did she set the seal of her own remarkable personality on every department of our nursing home—for that modest appellation would better befit our little hospital at its start—that her spirit seems to preside and dominate it still, to this day. Whenever on one of my visits to my old home, I attend a meeting of the Union, I feel as if I must find Frau Hachenberg there, in her accustomed place, coming forward to receive me, and it is as if the fifty years had gone past like a single day, for there, at all events, everything seems unchanged.

Unchanged—but grown and developed. From those small beginnings great things have sprung, round that centre a whole wide scheme of benevolent institutions has grouped itself. On its fiftieth anniversary, at the jubilee of the hospital, my thoughts

flew back to its founders, and a quaint old rhyme that Baron Bibra, one of them, was fond of repeating, came into my head, telling how—"On each grey grimy town, as the angels look down,"—they weep over the blindness and folly of poor human beings, toiling and struggling to raise mighty monuments here on earth, where we are but passing guests,—"While we build not in Heaven, and scarce have a care for Eternity's mansions, awaiting us there!" I know not whence he had the homely verses, but they always went to my heart. How few of us build for Eternity, and yet how easy it were to take a small piece of Heaven into the earthly habitations we are at such pains to construct!

Yet those earthly abodes are very dear to us at times, and rightly so, for the sake of all those who have lived in them. I love every corner, every stone of my dear Neuwied. And not merely the castle of my fathers, not merely the cradle of my race, but the little town itself, so bright, and clean and well-kept, the very model of the picturesque Rhenish town, whose simplicity I would not exchange for all the luxury of Cosmopolis, and whose modest dwellings, and narrow, old-fashioned streets may surely compare favourably at all events on æsthetic grounds with the sky-scrapers of the noisy, over-crowded cities of the New World! So dear was ever to me my childhood's home, in weal and woe, even the inundations seemed something to be proud of, and I knew that I was not alone in this, but that many of the good townsfolk of Neuwied shared in the feeling

that made me wind up one of my Rhine-songs with the words:

> If in our town the river
> Is a more frequent guest,
> 'Tis surely that he loves us
> Better than all the rest!

Seriously enough, it will ever seem to me a favoured spot, and I would have it as it is, and tremble when I hear the schemes discussed—it may be half in jest—of throwing a big bridge across the Rhine and giving to the industries of the quiet little place such development as would soon convert it into an important commercial town. It were a thousand pities! There is little fear, I think, of our seeing such changes, and come what may, the Past is ours. I can still say my Rhine and my Neuwied, for my strong attachment to my birthplace and my native land will be with me to the last.

CHAPTER XV

MY TUTORS

I use the word advisedly, the direction of my studies, after my twelfth year, being almost entirely taken out of female hands, my mother feeling more confidence in the competence of persons of the other sex to impart to me the sound and thorough instruction she insisted on and which must moreover be in accordance with her own views, and not in the least on the pattern of the ordinary curriculum for girls. Religious instruction she had always been in the habit of giving us herself and she kept up the practice until within a few weeks of my confirmation, preparing over night with great pains the subject of the lesson which she gave us every morning at six o'clock, and which was sometimes a theological disquisition, sometimes a survey of ecclesiastical history. For these, as for all my other lessons, I had to write essays, rather for the purpose of obliging me to summarise and recapitulate systematically all that I had learnt, than as an encouragement to the expression of my own ideas; this exercise was, notwithstanding, probably of the greatest value to me as enabling me to acquire very early great facility with my pen. Already at quite an early age I had my own very decided views about style, and I remember as quite a child coming into conflict with the very first of my male teachers—one of the masters from the Neuwied Grammar-school, engaged to give

me German lessons—concerning an essay on "Springtime," I had written for him. Inspired by so congenial a theme, I had simply let myself go, and the pages I handed to Herr Nohl were probably more remarkable for originality than for academic correctness of form. Whether he laid too much stress on negligencies of styles, which in my youthful impetuosity I was too little inclined to heed, I can no longer say; but I know that his unsparing criticism of my work struck me as unjust, and that the corrections he proposed did not seem to me to improve it at all.

Latin I was taught by my brother's tutor, joining Wilhelm at his lessons, a plan adopted partly in order to give him the stimulant of emulation, but which became a source of unspeakable pleasure and profit to myself. I had such delight and displayed so much facility in the acquisition of a new language, that linguistic talent was supposed to be my special gift. No one understood, nor was I myself until long after aware, that it was language, and not languages, that was my real concern. Unconsciously, I was forging for my own use the weapon that was to serve me later on, and this peep into the beauties of the Latin tongue—for a mere peep it was, since I laboured under the disadvantage of having to plunge into its mysteries at the point at which my brother had arrived,—was yet of immense service to me, in enlarging my horizon, and affording me a cursory inspection of the treasures of another world. The grammar of that noble idiom I never rightly mastered, it is true, conscientiously as I

battled with it. Many and many a night have I fallen asleep over my books, my head resting on the ponderous old dictionary in which I was seeking the key to some involved construction in the verse, whose majestic cadence enchanted my ear, even before I had fully apprehended its true significance. My brother's tastes were very different from my own; it was not languages that interested him, but mathematics and the exact sciences. Inventions of all sorts were his special hobby, every new kind of machine had a special fascination for him, and he would have loved to be an engineer. The other course of lessons given us by Professor Preuner, on classic art, was perhaps of even greater efficiency in opening my eyes to the glories of the ancient world, since here there were no technical obscurities to interpose themselves between my vision and the masterpieces revealed. In a series of excellent drawings these were displayed to us, and their perfection pointed out and explained with so much enthusiasm by our professor, himself an ardent devotee of Grecian art, that we in turn learned to know and love these treasures of antiquity so thoroughly and well, my subsequent visits to the great European galleries containing the originals had nothing of strangeness or surprise,—it was but as if I were renewing acquaintance with old and well-loved friends, of whom I had lost sight for a while.

An equal meed of gratitude, though on other grounds, is due from me to the old mathematician, Henkel, who had been my father's tutor in former days, and who now laboured hard, though with but

poor results, to introduce the rudiments of his to me most dismal science into my very refractory brain! What endless trouble the dear old man took, and what inexhaustible patience he displayed in the attempt to initiate me into the mysteries of progressions and equations, or even the simple extraction of a square root! Under his kindly tuition I filled many note-books, covered whole pages with figures supposed to calculate the logarithm of a number, without even knowing what a logarithm was! Euclid I never understood at all; I can just remember that in every right-angled triangle the square on the hypothenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides; but why? Ah! that is a very different matter! As for algebra, it was utterly incomprehensible to me, so I contented myself with learning a few of the formulæ by heart. Just as in a cousin of mine,—a man of great learning, considerable literary culture, and possessed of a fine taste in painting,—the musical sense is entirely wanting, so to me the properties pertaining to number and quality will forever remain a sealed book.

To my French governesses I owe thanks for having so thoroughly grounded me in their language, that I could employ it for my literary work as well as my mother-tongue, one of my books being written originally in French. They too were my guides on my first incursions in the glorious domain of French literature, whose vast treasure-house I ransacked greedily, dwelling with special delight on the matchless beauty of the great prose-writers, my ear, accustomed to the more marked cadence of German verse,

having always, I confess, been slightly deaf to the melody of the Alexandrine couplet. To the earlier poets of course this restriction does not apply, and Villon and Clément Marot became each in his own way dear to me, as were Ronsard and the other illustrious members of the Pléïade.

Then came a moment, on which I can look back with a certain special satisfaction, during which I was left without either governess or preceptor of any sort to pursue my studies entirely on my own account, save for the advice given me for my reading by my parents. Those were the months which I devoured with avidity every book that came in my way—even history, I remember, and not only such works as Schiller's "Thirty Years' War" and "Revolt of the Netherlands," rendered fascinating by their literary style, but, to please my mother, the drier pages of Becker's great Universal History, in its fourteen volumes, were all waded through, rather more perfunctorily, I fear, than some of my lighter reading! Still, the hours spent thus were surely not altogether lost, and the habit of independent study, once acquired, never left me.

But this course of independent study could not of course be allowed to go on indefinitely, and with the professor on whom, after much deliberation, my parents' choice ultimately fell, they, like myself, had every reason to be satisfied. This was a very young *savant,* named Sauerwein, a protégé of the Prince Consort's friend, Baron Stockmar, by whom he was recommended to my parents, as being capable of undertaking the entire direction of my studies, from

the stage at which I had now arrived. He was a man of quite remarkable attainments, his linguistic talent in particular having gained for him the reputation of a second Mezzofanti, with such apparent ease did he apply himself to acquiring each new language to add to his already goodly store—about thirty, it seems to me, he spoke quite fluently at the time when I knew him. To myself the charm of Sauerwein's teaching lay in his having no cut and dried pedagogic method; not considering it the chief object of education to alter the direction towards which his pupil's tastes and abilities naturally turned, he had no wish to force my mind into a groove into which it could never fit itself, but rather made it his aim to adapt himself to the exigencies of the situation. In after years my tutor owned to me how great his amazement had been, when in the place of the child of thirteen he believed his future pupil to be, he found a young girl, tall for her years and very self-composed, who in a few well-chosen words thanked him for the trouble he was about to give himself. And his surprise reached its height when the following morning he heard the "Prisoner of Chillon" very dramatically recited by the pupil who was to learn English from him!

It was well for me that I was so thoroughly prepared, as to be the better able to profit by the unusual and really admirable course of instruction Herr Sauerwein now entered on. Its range was wide and varied, history—and English constitutional history in particular—occupying a very considerable part of it, an exhaustive knowledge of the

political development of that country being deemed essential, at a moment when all other nations seemed bent on blindly copying English customs and institutions, however little compatible these might be with their own mind and character. Many a State has since had to learn to its cost, the mistake of transplanting growths of foreign culture upon their soil, and the impossibility of amalgamating these alien elements with the national life. But at that time, in Germany as elsewhere, the admiration for all things English made historians like Macaulay and Carlyle extremely popular, and also encouraged the study of English literature. That part of the programme was pure delight to me. Under my new preceptor's guidance I obtained a comprehensive survey of the whole vast field, from Chaucer to modern times. The Scottish dialect was no bar to my appreciation of Burns; many of his poems I learnt by heart, and can remember still. But the literature of my own country was not neglected, and here also we started reviewing it from its origins, deciphering early Gothic fragments, continuing our quest through Eddas and Nibelungen, and lingering with joyful pride among the heroes sung of by Gottfried and by Wolfram, in the poems that are so glorious a national heritage. So well did I love them, the noble knights of King Arthur's Court, and the doughty champions of the Holy Grail, that I can hardly forgive Wagner the liberties he has taken with these fine old stories, in order to suit them to the requirements of his music, glorious though that be. The versions of these sublime legends given

by Wagner came doubtless as a revelation to those to whom they were as yet unknown;—but to us, who had lived among them and loved them from our birth, his arbitrary mode of treatment was rather of the nature of a sacrilege. The term is perhaps too strong, but I cannot forget my keen disappointment at certain features of the representations at Bayreuth. It is on this account that I prefer the *Meistersinger* to all Wagner's other works, since he had here no legend to alter or spoil, but simply a material which he could turn and twist as he pleased, and which could only gain by his skilful handling and by the musical atmosphere which his genius conjured up around the personages of his drama.

From the study of our old Germanic legends in their epic form, we passed on to the early poetic monuments of other lands, collections of primitive songs and ballads being ransacked for their best specimens, whilst the great national epics were made the object of more exhaustive scrutiny. Throughout the whole of this vast field of exploration, my tutor's remarkable linguistic equipment made him the surest and best qualified of guides; Sanscrit and Russian were as familiar to him as the Neo-Latin tongues or Celtic idioms; snatches of Hungarian song alternated on his lips with verses of the Persian and Arabic poets; and his reading was as extensive as his literary taste was sound. Some of the fine old poems with which I then became acquainted—the "Kalerala" or "Ramayana" and "Mahalharata" for instance, in which the soul of a whole race has been enshrined and preserved, have

since by the talent and industry of translators, and increased facilities of publication, been made easily accessible to all; but in those days neither the Finnish, nor the great epics of Hindustan, were popularly known, and it was no mean privilege I enjoyed, in being led through these labyrinths of delight by one to whom every step of the way was familiar.

It was Sauerwein's aim, to give me something more than a superficial acquaintance with all that is best in the literature of the whole world; our course of reading was in consequence strangely diversified; Ossian and the Minnesänger, Sakuntala and the "Gerusalemme Liberata," these were but a few of the multitudinous and bewildering contrasts forced upon my youthful brain, to which some credit is perhaps due for having borne without ill results so unusual a strain. On my progress in Italian Herr Sauerwein laid special stress, and, as I afterwards learnt, from the very kindest motives. He was well aware both of my poetic proclivities and of the persistent attempts to stifle these, and, thinking it a pity that my imaginative powers should not have fair play, he quietly encouraged me under cover of the Italian essays set me and into which no one else looked, to give my fancy the reins and write as the spirit prompted. Long after, he showed me a whole pile of these compositions, and told me of the satisfaction he had felt in watching the dawn of a talent, of whose existence no one else, and I myself least of all, was really cognisant at that time. Little did he think, when he recited to me some of the old Welsh songs, that one day, in the assembly

of the bards, I should be acclaimed by them as one of their number. Nor could my mother foresee, in the infinite pains she bestowed on improving my handwriting, that the Gothic and ornamental letters she set before me as models would become to me as a simple running-hand, and that I should fill whole volumes with finely traced characters, imitating the missals illuminated with such care and reverence by pious monks of old.

I had as schoolroom a little room leading out of my mother's, so that she could be present at all my lessons, in the next room, even when she was too ill to leave her bed. Few mothers I think can have taken their duties more seriously. Our religious instruction, as I said, she always gave us herself, assisted by my father. Her old clerical friend, Pastor Dilthey, came and stayed with us at Monrepos just a few weeks before my confirmation, to prepare me for it, but the real work of preparation had been accomplished by my mother beforehand. The examination that precedes the ceremony took place in Monrepos, in our own woods, in the presence of more than a hundred people, members of our family on both sides and many friends, and among the latter that most constant of friends, the Empress Augusta, who never missed an opportunity of showing her affection and regard. Never shall I forget that solemn moment of my life, and my dear little Otto's touching words, which he wrote for me in the little volume of the "Imitation" he gave me in remembrance of the day. For some time before the confirmation, in order that I might give my whole

thoughts to preparing for so serious an event, my music-lessons had been stopped; I had not been allowed to practise at all, so that it was with renewed energy that I returned to it afterwards. The riding-lessons which I now had from one of my uncle's equerries, a most excellent riding-master, gave me less pleasure. This exercise, like dancing, seemed dull to me, from lack of intellectual stimulus.

But I should never have done if I tried to enumerate all those who contributed to my education, and from whom at some time or other I have learnt. It was not always from one's regular professors that the most useful lessons came. We are forever learning, for Life itself is a school from which there is no playing truant, and whose teaching only stops at the grave. As for educational systems and theories, Nature, the greatest teacher of all, often laughs these to scorn. The best of them is but a bed of Procrustes, to fit which human limbs are ruthlessly lopped or stretched. Wiser were we to leave to Nature's self the task of fashioning each individual in youth. She has not made all on one pattern, and diversity, not uniformity, is her aim.

CHAPTER XVI

MARIE

WHENEVER my lips pronounce the beloved name, I am choked with the tears that gather round my heart, and silently overflowing, suffuse my eyes. She was the sunshine of my youth, illuminating it with her own radiant brightness, with her affection, her irrepressible swiftness of perception and joyful play of fancy, with the unspeakable tenderness that was hers. As children we were always together, the three Bibras and we three. There was a perpetual interchange of letters and messages, little notes constantly making their way across the quadrangle that lay between the castle and their house, with some such whimsically worded invitation as the following: "The three little Widgeons request the pleasure of the three little Bearers' company to tea." Or, it might be, the other way round. We were all of about the same age, Marie being born in the same year as my brother Wilhelm, her brother Berthold and I the preceding year, whilst our poor Otto, had he lived, would be the same age as her sister, Louise, Countess Bernstorff, sole survivor of that trio. But death had already thinned the ranks of the Bibra family, two dear children having been laid quite early in the tomb. These were the baby Anna, who died in our house at Monrepos, and whose little waxen face and cold white hands I well remember, and the little Max, Marie's darling,

a fine manly little fellow, whose loss the elder sister never ceased to deplore. Her beautiful eyes, soft and limpid as those of a gazelle, ran over with tears at the mention of his name. Those tears seemed always ready to flow, as if her heart were overfull, and it needed but a word to stir the depths and bring them to the surface. How quietly they coursed down the fair young cheeks, never reddening them or distorting the delicate features, but giving her the appearance of a blossom refreshed by rain. And those lovely lustrous eyes looked only the more brilliant for the tears they had shed, lit up by a soft steady radiance that I have never seen elsewhere. . . . But how can I find words to tell of her sweetness, of all she was to me, my heart's best friend, the dear companion of my youth!

Thrown together as we were by circumstances, and with so much that was sympathetic in our natures, we were drawn yet closer by the hand of Fate, by a certain similarity in the fortunes—or rather in the ill-fortune that befell our families. There is perhaps no stronger tie than that which springs from an affliction borne in common, and the friendship that united Marie von Bibra and myself, founded on the sorrows we had shared, but little resembled that which ordinarily exists between girls of our age. Young as she was, and naturally light-hearted, she had known much sorrow. After the baby-sister, and the little brother whom she loved so well, she was fated to see the only remaining one, Berthold, called away one springtime in the bloom and pride of youth. It was on a cold dull May day

—how unlike the May mornings of poetry and legend!—that I stood with her beside the coffin in which her brother had just been laid, and together we afterwards wove the garlands that went with him to the grave. And in all the anguish of the years of Otto's martyrdom it was she who supported and comforted me, when the load of sorrow would otherwise have seemed too heavy to be borne. These were no weak, no ordinary ties, that bound our souls together, and the fellowship of sorrow rests on a firmer basis than any other fraternity. But our joys were in common too, and how much increased, by being shared!

Thus we grew up together, in joy and sorrow, until the day when, coming from poor Otto's deathbed, Baron Bibra said, as he wrung my father's hand, "Before the year is out, another of my dear children will lie under the earth!"—"Yes, yes," he continued, in answer to his friend's look of horror and amazement, "she coughs just like Berthold,—it is only the beginning, but I know the tone,—she too must go!"

It was only too true. Marie, who was just sixteen, was taken away to the sea by her parents; but scarcely six months later, a message was brought me by a dear and trusted friend, to prepare me for the shock of seeing her again. Far from deriving any benefit from the sea-air, she had come back with inflammation of the lungs, and already all hope was given up. My one wish was to fly to her bedside; but even then I had to wait some days to see her, till she had rallied a little and had strength to

talk to me. Ah! how sad was that meeting! Death was in her face, in the hectic flush on her cheeks, in the unnatural brilliancy of her eyes, in the transparent whiteness of her hands, as she stretched them towards me, lying in bed, with the magnificent tresses of her fair silky hair, that usually crowned her head like an aureole, hanging in two heavy braids across the pillow. She could not raise her voice above a whisper as she told me: "I thought I should die, while we were away, at Scheveningen! Oh! Lisi,—I did not want to die!"

After that, she seemed to rally a little, and each day I paid her a visit, sitting beside her whilst with those skilful fingers of hers—fingers that always seemed with a touch to accomplish marvels—she executed a host of charming things, little cardboard objects that were as pretty in their way as the beautiful ivory carvings that had formerly been her delight, but for which her strength no longer sufficed. Feeble as they were, those slender diaphanous fingers had lost nothing of their dexterity, and her inventive faculty was still fertile as of yore. Never was there a daintier toy than the miniature fortress she cut out in cardboard,—a feudal castle, complete in every detail. But my heart grew heavier with each visit, for the apparent improvement in her health was but illusive,—the flicker of a dying candle ere it be extinguished.

When the last parting came, she was just seventeen, and so sweet and pure, she looked fit for Heaven indeed, as she waited patiently for the summons. Her eyes grew brighter every day, her nos-

trils, transparent as alabaster, dilated and quivered with every breath she drew, and the smile of unearthly sweetness on her lips was like a perpetual leave-taking. Earlier in that very year, my poor brother's sufferings had at last ended, and now, with the knowledge that my father's days were numbered also, I must lose my one, my best-beloved friend!

Could I but have been with her to the last! But it has so often been my lot to be condemned by circumstances to go from the side of those whom I loved best on earth, with the full consciousness that I should see them here no more. Then for the first time that bitter experience was mine. My father was ordered to a milder climate for his health, so in October we all set out for Baden-Baden, to pass the winter there. Once more, before we parted, Marie and I resolved to be photographed together. I held her fast by the hand, as if by so doing I could hold her back, for the whole time while the photograph was being taken, my eyes were fixed on her, and saw the ominous quivering of the nostrils, that betokened how great the effort. Quite exhausted by it, she lay down again, and I sat by her side for a while, until my mother fetched me. We said good-bye; and then—"You will turn round, will you not," she said, "my Lisi, at the door, and look back at me once more!" And I did turn round, and look back at her smiling, though my heart was like to break, and once outside, I had to lean against the wall to steady myself, so shaken was I by choking sobs. And there stood her poor mother, and looked at me, with tearless eyes. Such silent misery I have

never seen in any other countenance. This was the fourth of her children whom Frau von Bibra must see pass away, and since the death of Max she had been an invalid herself. She might have been another Niobe, white as marble, with all the life and light spent in her big dark eyes, of a velvety softness, like rich brown pansies. Both parents were heroic, but whilst the unhappy mother bore each fresh blow in perfect silence, the father's resignation even took the form of outer cheerfulness, that did not fail him now, when Marie, his darling, was being torn from him. "Death," Herr von Bibra was accustomed to say, "should be a dear friend to me; he has been such a frequent visitor in my house!"

All through that winter I wrote each day to my dear Marie. Then towards the end of February came worse news, that she was suffering from frightful headaches, ending in delirium. This lasted a whole fortnight, during which she was always fancying she saw me, and calling me by name. "Ah! she was there, my Lisi!" she would cry; "if we could but die, all of us, together, and fly up to heaven where the others are waiting for us!" And the gates of Paradise seemed to be already open to her, for she told of all the wonders she saw, its undimmed glories, and the flowers that never fade—and these raptures were reflected in her face. The last thing I sent her was a little night-lamp in biscuit-china, like a tiny chapel, so delicate and fragile. And one night Baron Bibra wrote me these words:—"The little lamp, whose soft light seems to plunge our souls in an atmosphere of prayer and holiness, sheds its gentle rays over my child's pale

still face, as if whispering to her the loving thoughts of her who sent it!" The tears rise once more to my eyes, as I write this. As if the five-and-forty years that have passed since that day counted for nothing! It was a heartbreaking meeting with the poor father, when shortly after this he came to see us in Baden; and terrible again was the return to Neuwied, to find their house desolate, and the poor bereaved mother, more Niobe-like than ever, and her big velvety eyes still strained and tearless! Meantime—hardest ordeal of all I went through—during that winter of anxiety and anguish I had been obliged to go to my first ball, in order that my father should for once see me dance. It was with endless care and precautions that the short journey to Karlsruhe was undertaken, and once there, everything that friendship could do for him was done, by those truest and best of friends, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Baden. Notwithstanding all their care, he of course coughed for the rest of the night—but—he had had his wish—he had seen his daughter at her first ball! And my feet felt like lead —were as heavy as my heart, which ached so that I knew not how to smile and look well pleased, and enter fittingly into the amiable small-talk of my partners. How unhappy I was, and how the old unhappiness comes over me once more, as I write this! For grief and joy are both eternal, but grief so much more violent in its nature, that did we but rightly consider it, our one aim should be, to bring some joy into each other's lives, to sweeten the bitterness that must needs be the portion of all.

It was the very violence of my grief that helped

me through the next few months, for I plunged headlong into work—there was no other way for me —studying, practising—seven hours in the day sometimes—till I was tired out—anything so as not to have to *think!* But now I can look back with gratitude on the sympathy shown me by so many friends, and remember the kind and feeling words of Monsieur de Bacourt, Talleyrand's former secretary, when he learnt the death of the friend and companion of my youth:—"C'est bien dur de ne plus pouvoir dire—te rappelles-tu?"

Next year, death was again busy in our midst. This time it was my father who was called away. And now at last Baron Bibra's fortitude gave way. He who had seen with almost stoical endurance his children go before him to the tomb, broke down completely after taking his last farewell of the friend of a lifetime. To that long unbroken friendship, a striking testimony was furnished in recent years by the simple perusal of all the documents signed by both during Bibra's tenure of office in my father's lifetime. From studying the contents of these dry deeds, my brother's steward, Baron von der Recke, had been able to gather an intimate knowledge of his predecessor's character, as also of my father's, and of their mutual affection and regard for one another. I marvelled indeed when he imparted to me the result of his researches, and some of the conclusions he had drawn, so correct were they in many minutest particulars. I learnt from this, the truth that even archives may contain, with their record of dull dry facts, and of the poetry that may sometimes lurk in a stiffly worded deed!

CHAPTER XVII

MY BROTHER OTTO

In telling the story of my brother's short life, I cannot do better than employ in the first place the simple words of his faithful attendant, Mary Barnes, who for seven years watched over him devotedly night and day, by her untiring care doing much to alleviate the pain he suffered from his birth. Her notes begin thus:—

"Friday, 22nd November, 1850, the anxiously expected treasure entered this valley of sorrow. The event can be forgotten by none who were present on that day. For some time past but small hopes had been entertained of the child coming into the world alive, and we therefore rejoiced the more, when after many hours of pain and danger, a fine boy was born. New life, new hope sprang up; but the joy was of short duration, to be transformed only too soon into lasting sorrow. Very shortly after his birth, the poor infant's laboured breathing showed that all was not well with him, and this led to the discovery of a serious organic defect. At first the doctors believed that this could be remedied by a slight operation, and an eminent surgeon was sent for. Unfortunately he arrived too late to operate that day, and the night that followed was a terrible one. I did not think it possible for the poor babe to last till morning; it was blue in the face, as I held it, all night long, upright in my arms, to prevent it being suffo-

cated. At last morning came, and after due examination, the operation was fixed for eleven o'clock. We moistened the poor child's lips with a few drops of milk, as it had not sufficient strength to take the breast. The malformation was more serious, and the operation in consequence attended with far greater difficulty, than the doctors had foreseen. It lasted so long, and left the tiny patient so exhausted, we hardly thought he would survive it many seconds. His whole appearance was changed; the skin had taken a dull yellowish hue, and the little limbs were so cold, we resorted to every possible means of restoring a little warmth. This state of utter exhaustion lasted for twenty-four hours, during which we kept moistening the lips with milk and with a few drops of a resuscitating medicine, it being the opinion of the doctors that could we but succeed in prolonging life for a few hours, all might be well in the end.

When at last the feeble flame of life seemed to burn a little more steadily, I was indeed shocked to see, in performing the little sufferer's toilet, the awful change wrought in his poor little tortured body. He seemed to have dwindled away, to have grown so small, so fragile, that one feared that the lightest touch must hurt him. He did succeed in getting a little sleep, but his sufferings were indescribable, and caused him, when awake, to scream incessantly night and day, till the little voice, worn out, became weak and hoarse, and the cry ended in a feeble moan, whilst the baby face twitched with pain. Early on the morning of the tenth day he

Prince Otto zu Wied

seemed so near death, that the ceremony of christening was gone through in haste. The name of Otto Nicholas was given him. All day long we thought every breath must be his last; and yet again he rallied, and was able after a few days to be nursed, which was the greatest comfort, as it often soothed him to sleep.

But when the pain was too violent, nothing was of the slightest avail, and the fits of screaming it occasioned had other ill results. And so the days passed; in alternations of more or less violent pain, for he was seldom altogether free from it; and this of course retarded his growth and prevented him from gaining strength. He remained very, very small, with a sweet little pale face, and big blue eyes, full of expression. In the spring I was able to take him out, and hoped that might strengthen him. By the beginning of May we moved to Bonn, for him to be under the observation of the surgeon who had performed the operation; and there his condition became so far satisfactory, that he seemed to begin at last to grow and develop in a normal manner. The terrible fits of pain still continued, for although everything that could be was done to alleviate them, they were of a nature that rendered all human succour unavailing. When out of pain, he lay perfectly still; one never heard him laugh or coo like other babies. And, although he began to lift himself up and take notice of things, his growth was very slow, and the cutting of each tooth almost cost him his life. When he had to be weaned, there were fresh dangers, and a journey to England, undertaken to

give him the benefit of the sea air, very nearly proved fatal. In London a celebrated physician was consulted, whose opinion absolutely coincided with that of the doctor in Bonn, both affirming that the child could never live to grow up, human skill being powerless to aid in such a case. The asses' milk, however, prescribed by the London doctor, proved very beneficial, and for some time this with arrowroot formed his diet. He remained a very small baby, and only took his first few steps on his second birthday, having also made no attempt at all to speak up to that time. But he was a dear sweet child, with eyes that looked at one so pitifully, it was as if they were imploring help. There was something in him quite different to all other children. It must have been the fearful attacks of pain, in which several hours of each night and day were passed, that gave him this heavenly expression. In the summer of 1853, we went to Paris; and again the poor little thing was at death's door in a teething crisis. He was not yet three years old, but the delirium was hardly over, when he insisted, as he lay exhausted on his bed, that all the servants should come in to see him for a moment, and it was touching to see him stretch out his tiny little thin hand to each in turn, telling them how ill he had been, but that he was getting better! It took some time after this for him to recover his strength sufficiently to be able to walk again."

I have followed thus far the narrative of our good Barnes, giving in her own simple language an account of the first three years of the life over which

she watched so faithfully. It was at about the time when these notes stop, that the letter of a friend staying with us in Paris, describes the poor child in these words:—"Little Otto seems to grow smaller and smaller, and he is always suffering. You cannot think what a dear child it is,—much too good for this world!" And a little later she wrote:—"Otto is marvellously precocious, his mental development is quite extraordinary, he is altogether an ethereal little being!" On his third birthday we had sent out a little table with all his presents, and stood round it, eager to witness the expression of his delight. But he could only say—"Is all that for me?" as he looked at each thing in turn with big wondering eyes, and it was only a month later, that, looking out from the window at the children walking and running happily in the Champs Elysées, he asked:—"And have those little children really no pain?" And when he heard that they had not:—"Oh! how glad I am!" he exclaimed.

When he was four years old, a little white rabbit was given him, which became his greatest pet, his constant companion, following his little master about everywhere like a dog, and licking his face and hands. The only time I ever saw Otto give way to a real fit of despair, was on one occasion when he believed that his dear Bunny had burnt itself. The poor little fellow flung himself on the ground, with piercing screams, tearing at his hair, and his heart still went on thumping like a hammer, long after he had convinced himself that his beloved playfellow

had really met with no harm. The faithful little creature outlived its master just a year.

Quite early the poor boy had begun to practise most marvellous self-control. After a sleepless night, he would walk up and down in his room, with his little fists clenched, saying from time to time—"now I am ready—now I can go in!"—until he felt that he was sufficiently prepared to appear among the rest of us at the breakfast-table, where he would take his place, pale as death, but apparently quite calm. When he was five years old, he began learning to read, and also to join Wilhelm and myself in reciting poetry, as was our custom every Sunday. In this he soon gave evidence of quite exceptional talent; from simple rhymes and fables in verse passing on quickly to the ballads of Schiller and Bürger, and these he declaimed with so much spirit and such a rare sense of humour, that it was a treat to see and hear him.

In a friend's letter of April, 1855, I find the following passage:—"Otto is really touching; all day yesterday, after the doctor had gone, he kept repeating—'the good doctor says that if I ate no bread, I should have less pain; how kind of him, to think of what would be good for me!'—This is what he finds to say, instead of a word of complaint at being deprived of the food he likes best."

He very soon began to take the greatest pleasure in his lessons—history and botany above all. His tiny fingers were very skilful in arranging and pasting in an album the specimens of plants he collected. In this as in everything else his keen

sense of order was shown; everything belonging to him had its right place, and was kept in perfect order. He was very fond of flowers, and they flourished under his care; the fuchsias that stood in his window were literally covered with blossoms. He began Greek when he was seven years old, and Latin the next year. Greek, however, always remained his favourite study, and he loved to recite verses in that language. One day a lady asked him to let her hear him say a Greek fable. "Why?" he asked rather drily. "You would not understand it if I did!" "That is quite true, but I like to hear the sound." "Ah! that is another matter!" and he began reciting without more ado.

In the autumn of the year 1858, we went for a little tour in Switzerland and Northern Italy. Otto's delight at all the wonders he saw was unbounded, and his manner of expressing it caused general amazement. "That cannot be a child!" people said, when they heard him reciting verses of the "Diver" by the Falls of the Rhine, and again quoting appropriate lines of Gœthe and Bürger in the valley of the Rhine, at that moment still ravaged by recent floods. Everywhere guides and cicerones turned to him with their chief explanations, his eager questions and intelligent little face with the big bright eyes showing the deep interest he felt. In Milan his enthusiasm was aroused by the life of S. Charles Borromeo. Noticing this, the priest who was guiding us round the cathedral, and who could speak a little English, took Otto by the hand, and addressed all his remarks to him. Such examples of human

grandeur always excited his passionate admiration, and it was his constant dream, one day to leave his mark in the world.

On our return to Germany that same year, we spent a month at Freiburg, and it is from here that are dated some of my brother's most characteristic letters, to a little friend of his own age—simple, childlike letters, by no means free from mistakes, but showing a most remarkable depth of thought and precocious intelligence on the part of a child who had not yet quite accomplished his eighth year.

The next year, up to the autumn of 1859, was the very best and happiest of his short life, and during the summer we soon began to hope once more that he might after all perhaps get well. He was much out of doors, able to work in his own little garden, and the healthy exercise, the life in the open air gave him for the moment quite a blooming appearance that might well delude us with false hopes. None who saw him trot about, with his gardening tools flung across his shoulder, his little face flushed and glowing, beneath the straw hat perched jauntily on his fair curls,—no one who saw him thus could have guessed what his sufferings had hitherto been, nor have suspected how soon he was again to be their victim. For that short period his appetite improved, and he seemed able to satisfy it without becoming a prey to the agonising pains with which the digestive process had for so long been almost invariably accompanied. During the harvesting he was in his glory; sometimes out in the fields for hours, taking an active part in the proceedings, and

so lively, and joyous, and full of fun, it did everyone good to see him.

Thus the summer went by, but all at once in October Otto was seized with an attack of pain, even more violent and spasmodic than any of the preceding ones, and this being repeated and becoming of very frequent recurrence, a great specialist was consulted, who declared that an operation was necessary. This, although attended with considerable danger, was successfully performed in March, 1860, the long and painful examinations that preceded it, and that were not always carried out under anæsthetics, having been most heroically borne. But the results were not such as had been anticipated. Hardly had the little patient left his bed, before the attacks of pain began again with redoubled violence, to the consternation of the doctors, who felt their skill completely baffled by this unexpected occurrence.

The sympathy shown by the good townspeople at the time of the operation was most touching. Sometimes there was quite a little throng gathered all day in front of the iron railings before the Castle, to hear the latest tidings.

I have told of the deep interest the dear boy took in my confirmation, which took place that same summer. In the little volume of the "Imitation," which he gave me on that day, I asked him to write a few words, and without a moment's pause, he took his pen, and wrote in his firm clear characters:— "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sound-

ing brass, or a tinkling cymbal."—Otto. The gospel of Love had passed into his flesh and blood, had become part of his inmost being.

Directly it was possible, his lessons had begun again, for that was indeed the best, the only means of abstracting his thoughts, diverting them entirely from his own condition. The letters that I have from him, during a few weeks' absence from home about this time, point to the extraordinary self-command he had attained, whilst they also display most remarkable and varied intellectual interests. In some he tells me of his botanical studies and the experiments in horticulture that already so deeply interested him, in others, he spoke of the lectures on Art and Literature, which it had been arranged for different professors to give for his benefit. But Nature and her works he loved best of all, and I treasure the tiny little album he gave me about this time, in which specimens of various mosses were most beautifully arranged, together with a charming little essay, "My Love for the Leaves," a complete dissertation on all his favourite plants and trees, carefully enumerated, and their foliage described in every detail.

But his sufferings grew worse, the attacks of pain succeeding one another more frequently, and on Ascension Day of that same year every faint hope of his ultimate recovery was taken from us. The surgeon, by whom the last operation had been performed, discovered, on examining him again, in addition to the original organic trouble, the existence of a very large internal tumour, and pronounced that

in his opinion Otto could not possibly last another year. At the same time, my father's lungs were subjected to thorough examination, with the alarming result that in his case also the doctor declared no hope of recovery to exist, and that he could hardly be expected to live more than two years longer. Oh! that terrible Ascension Day! what a blight was cast over all our hearts! And the fearful attacks of pain went on, increasing in duration and in intensity, and giving the poor child an opportunity of displaying almost superhuman courage and endurance, above all in his constant and heroic efforts to hide some part of his sufferings from his beloved mother, whose anguish was indeed almost unendurable. But between the paroxysms, ever the same sweet serenity, even cheerfulness, and an immediate resumption of the study or occupation interrupted just before. His activity and energy were unbounded; he was always at work, either carving, pasting or cutting out; his hands were never at rest.

That summer brought one great joy to the poor little invalid, the return of his idolised elder brother, whose course of study had caused him to absent himself from home for some years, and who had meanwhile developed from a mere schoolboy into a tall youth. Otto's excitement was so great, that for the time being he felt no pain. Once more his laughter resounded through the house, and even out into the woods, where we lingered till quite late in those long, lovely summer days. Once more it was quite a gay, lively, youthful party that collected round the tea-table, and our merriment was so infectious that our

elders would often pause in their serious conversation to listen to the nonsense we talked, and join in our peals of laughter. An exhibition of celebrated pictures had just been opened in Cologne, and we all went over there one day to see them. The cartoons by Cornelius attracted Otto's attention more than all the rest, and he stood for a long time contemplating the one, concerning whose subject the rest of our party—although there were several scholars and artists with us—could not be agreed. To their astonishment, when the boy at last took his eyes off the picture, he said very quietly—"I know what it is!" and proceeded to describe in every detail the scene from the Odyssey, which it did indeed depict.

So long as his brother was in the house, Otto would not stir from his side. His admiration for the big elder brother, for his health and strength, was most touching, and it was refreshing to hear his generous outburst of indignation at any remark he considered in the slightest degree disparaging to his idol. Were there but the faintest hint of criticism, he would blaze up: "Wilhelm has beautiful eyes and splendid teeth, and is very, very clever!" In the warmth and sincerity of his heart, he could understand no grudging affection, no measured qualified praise. And this warm-heartedness was probably his greatest source of happiness, providing him with more glad hours than might well have been deemed possible in an existence so fraught with pain.

Very great pleasure he derived from the little

farmhouse, built in the style of a Swiss chalet, which my mother had originally planned as a present to him, on his coming of age. We had passed many happy hours there, but in the autumn of 1861, he was no longer able to ride or go thither on foot, and soon even the movement of the little donkey-carriage, in which for a time he drove there daily, also became unbearable, and one evening we had to pull up in the middle of the wood and wait till a litter was brought on which to carry him home. It was a pitiable sight; the little motionless body, worn out with suffering, stretched on the litter and borne along by grave silent men, while the flickering moon-beams darting through the branches shed an unearthly light over the small white face, and overhead night-hawks and screech-owls, circling round the sad little procession, filled the air with their jarring cries.

From the following October he could not walk at all, and was carried about everywhere in a little arm-chair, which was fastened on a litter. In this manner he was brought to table or taken out into the woods, where he would lie for hours, resting on his right side, with the dead leaves falling thickly round him. After this he was never again able to lie either on his back or on the left side. The course of his illness after this I find described in my letters to my absent brother Wilhelm, a few extracts from which I give here. . . . "Otto suffered frightfully yesterday all day long, and was almost beside himself at the slightest movement in the room. . . . Sleep can only be obtained by means of

laudanum. . . . He seems to grow more and more loving towards us all; I have never seen such depth of feeling in another; there is a strange depth in the big serious eyes, that appear to be untouched by the sufferings of the frail body. The other day, as I sat beside him in the wood, he said many such touching things, winding up with accusing himself of cowardice, in taking laudanum to procure relief from pain. I could only comfort him by reminding him that it was not of his own free will he took it, but to please others. . . . For the last two days Otto has stayed in bed altogether. . . . The agony he has suffered is indescribable; it wrings one's heart to witness it. . . . Mamma has been letting him know the truth about his condition, thinking that it must comfort him to know that his suffering will soon be over. But at first he wept at the thought of parting with her, saying that he could not bear it. Then he grew calmer and discussed the matter quite quietly. He told mamma yesterday that he wished to be buried in Monrepos, under the old trees, with a white cross at the head of his grave, and quantities of flowers planted on it. Then he went on to ask, if in the life beyond he should see all the great men of antiquity, and Socrates above all—and also if he should still see mamma—sitting in her chair, just as she was then!—"I hope so, my child!" she told him. . . . Papa is a little better. He came down yesterday for the first time for three weeks. The meeting was a touching one; papa himself, worn to a shadow, looking down so anxiously on the poor little pale face, that was gaz-

ing with rapture up in his. . . . Otto suffers more and more. He begins to have hallucinations, sees himself surrounded by hideous faces that threaten him. . . . He seems to have reached a degree of pain, beyond which it is impossible to go. His sufferings are indescribable. A little time ago, he said he had to pray each day that he might welcome death, for the thought of the parting was still too terrible to him; but now he begins to comfort himself with the thought that there is no real separation, and to rejoice that he may at last rest and be free from pain. And he has been giving all his instructions, telling us his wishes, and always coming back to the provision to be made for his own two special attendants. . . . Each new day is worse than the last. . . . Once he cried out:—"I cannot bear it!" but when mamma said:—"Yes, we will bear it together!" he grew quieter and murmured—"Father, Thy will be done!" . . . Although the doses of laudanum are constantly being increased, he sleeps very little, the pain is too agonising. . . . Of mamma I say nothing. What she suffers, she keeps to herself; she says sometimes she feels as if a saw were at her heart, being slowly drawn backwards and forwards."

Otto had always taken special pleasure in following the mental development of the lives he read about. He found satisfaction in the thought that the activity of the spirit can neither be blighted nor repressed. Every fact or occurrence that seemed to bear on this theory interested him; the story of Kasper Hauser was a case in point, and delighted

him greatly, whilst the inactive life of the poor young Duke of Reichstadt was simply incomprehensible to him—"To live to be twenty-two,—and have *done* nothing!" he would exclaim, almost impatiently.

There seemed at one moment to be danger of his being too severe in his judgment of others, but directly my mother pointed this out to him, he saw his mistake and took pains to avoid it.

To the last his spirit remained active, and in the intervals of pain he was always busily employed. Close beside his pillow, near the little Testament that never left him, lay a case of the different instruments he used for painting and carving, and with them he fabricated all sorts of pretty things for us all. His strong sense of the beautiful, of grace and harmony, never deserted him, neither did the humour with which he had so often enlivened us. After the fiercest attack of pain, whilst all around him were still overcome by witnessing his struggles, he would suddenly make some witty remark, and would not rest content till he had brought us all to join in his laughter.

But the pain grew worse and worse, and he was so weakened by it, that on his eleventh birthday we dared to hope, that before the day was over, he would be keeping it in Paradise. We had brought him flowers, and some of them we strewed over his bed, and wreathed around his pillow, and it might have been in his last slumber that he was lying there, so silent and still, and the sheets no whiter than his wan white face. But that mercy was not

yet granted him; there was still much more suffering in store. A month later came my eighteenth birthday, and directly I came to see him in the morning, he pulled out from under his pillow a tiny marble slab, on which notwithstanding the awkward position in which he lay, he had contrived to paint in water-colours the words: "God is love." When he gave it me, we could only throw our arms round one another and cry together. The night before he had made the remark, that whatever presents he now gave must be of a lasting nature.

For on account of the last few dreadful weeks, during which his illness made rapid strides, I turn to letters written by me at the time, and copy a few pages.

"*December,* 1861.—Our preparations of Christmas are being made with more than usual care, so that the festival may be kept with all due solemnity,—for the last time, as we well know, that we shall all celebrate it together on earth. . . . Papa is very weak, and the fits of coughing are almost intermittent. With him, as with Otto, it is only a question of time. . . . Christmas Eve was very solemn and peaceful and beautiful: the few days preceding it had been exceptionally good and free from pain, so that Otto could be wheeled into the room where the Christmas-trees stood ready, and it was touching to see his little face, beaming with happiness, when the trees were lighted up, and the Christmas hymn sung as usual, by the whole household, led by me from my accustomed place at the organ. . . . But since then he has had two very disturbed nights,

and the dreadful attacks of pain have begun again. . . . 'Keep calm!' he called to mamma, after one of these,—'it is only the body that suffers, nothing of this can hurt the soul!'

"*January,* 1862.—Yesterday he thought he was dying, and took leave of us all, but when he saw mamma's tears, he again found strength to comfort her. The night that followed was a dreadful one; the sensation of suffocation so intense that, exhausted as he was, he sometimes stood upright in bed in the effort to breathe. . . . And through it all his patience and resignation are inexhaustible, and his affection for mamma and each one of us seems only to grow stronger. . . . The fits of pain are now so frequent, even mamma no longer keeps count of them. Last night she had to give him twenty-one drops of laudanum. . . . We pray that the end may be near. To-day his eyes are quite dim, and he can only bear that we speak in whispers. . . . But his first thought is still for mamma, and he says she is much more to be pitied than he. . . . It was her birthday yesterday, and Otto was in a great state of excitement. He gave her a flower-stand and a little casket, which he had himself designed. One could see the efforts he made to appear cheerful, whilst hardly for one moment free from pain. (He gave orders at the time for another present, for a surprise to his mother on her next birthday. She received it eleven months after his death!) . . .

"*February.*—His strength seems to be ebbing. . . . His one prayer is that he may die in full

consciousness. Another respite. . . . Then a new and worse pain. The poor child is being slowly tortured to death. . . . Sometimes, in his agony, cries of despair are forced from him, and then again he can talk with the utmost composure of the blessedness awaiting him when the last struggle is over. . . . We had a visit from Professor Perthes, who sat for some hours in Otto's room, talking to him and Uncle Nicholas. The Professor was so much struck by the invalid's keen interest in the subject being discussed, and his clear-headed practical suggestions, that he exclaimed on coming away from him:—"That boy is not going to die yet;—he thinks and feels like a grown-up man!" But a little later, after witnessing one of the cruel paroxysms of pain, our friend also was convinced that this matured intelligence he had just been admiring, only betokened that the soul, purified and ennobled by suffering, was already ripe for a better world. . . . The weakness increased. All day yesterday and all night long, he lay with his hands clasped in prayer, murmuring feebly:—"When will the hour of release come? when will the Angel of Peace appear, to bear me away?" His piety and resignation never fail him for one moment. . . . His hands are cold as ice, his brow like marble, his eyes sunken, but still bright with intelligence. . . . One evening he complained that he could no longer rightly distinguish our faces. Over his poor little wasted face the shadow of death is already creeping, but he is strangely beautiful with it. . . . Yesterday, Monday, as we sat as usual round him, he slowly

stretched out his poor feeble arms, exclaiming joyfully:—"Well, then, if this is to be the end, farewell to you all!" And his expression was rapturous, as he bade us each good-night, and prayed for blessings on us. . . . But even then it was not over . . . ."

The agony lasted two days longer. He seemed to sleep, but woke from time to time with a cry of anguish. He could no longer speak, though he still saw and heard everything, and gave signs that he understood. Then, at the very last, after a few broken accents, came the rattle in his throat, and the one word "Help!" loud and clear. And then a deathly silence. And mamma bent over him and murmured—"Thanks be to God! His name be praised for evermore!"

The struggle was over. Peace and heavenly calm spread themselves over the tired features, and a sweet smile played about his lips—the deep line across the high forehead alone showing how dearly this peace had been purchased.

Our dear Otto looked like an angel sleeping there; we could scarce tear ourselves away from him. My mother kept saying—"How quietly he rests!" and if anyone sobbed on coming into the room—"Hush! hush!" she said, "do not disturb my child!" With our own hands we placed him in his last little bed, and covered him over. The old clergyman from Biebrich, by whom the benediction had been spoken at my parents' marriage, now pronounced the last blessing over their beloved child.

Otto's best epitaph is contained in a letter from my father to an intimate friend, which concluded thus: " . . . On a little rising-ground not far from Monrepos, he sleeps his last sleep in the shade of the old linden trees. But he lives on forever in our memory, and this living remembrance, this communion with the dead, is our last best heritage, by which in the midst of the heavy loss, we are yet made rich sempiternally."

100731

DR 254 A3
Elisabeth.
From memory's shrine; the reminiscences of Carmen Sylva (H. M. Queen Elisabeth ...

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
DR254.A3
From memory's shrine :
0 00 01 0043290 5